THE MEANING OF HOLY BAPTISM

C. H. K. BOUGHTON

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BY THE REV.

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PREFACE

In February, 1916, there appeared the "First Interim Report of a Sub-Committee appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York's Committee and by Representatives of the English Free Churches' Commissions, in connection with the proposed World Conference on Faith and Order." This Report is a document of first-rate importance. It is signed by five members of the Church of England—three bishops, one clergyman, and one layman—and by five members of the Free Churches, whose names and positions give peculiar weight to their utterances. In the course of the Report it is stated that all the members of the Sub-Committee are agreed "that our Lord ordained, in addition to the preaching of His Gospel, the Sacraments of Baptism and of the Lord's Supper, as not only declaratory symbols, but also effective channels of His grace and gifts for the salvation and sanctification of men; and that these Sacraments being essentially social ordinances were intended to affirm the obligation of corporate fellowship as well as individual confession of Him." It is further stated that, "as regards the Sacraments—the conditions, objective and subjective, in their ministration and reception on which their validity depends," there are differences of opinion "which require further study and discussion."

The further "discussion" to which reference is here made is perhaps most helpfully promoted when members of different Christian Churches meet together, in friendly fashion, on perfectly equal terms, for days of quiet prayer and conference; and not a little important work has been done along these lines since the Report was issued. "Further study" suggests the careful re-examination of the questions at issue by individual scholars, and the publication of a series of essays upon them, each written from a different point of view and expressing its author's belief in positive and, as far as possible, uncontroversial terms. One reason for the publication of this essay upon Holy Baptism is that there may be available for consideration and criticism a fresh presentation of the subject, based directly upon the teaching of Holy Scripture, and in general harmony with the views of at any rate

one school of thought within the Church of England. The hope is that some small contribution may thus be made towards the promotion of that Reunion of Christendom, which, through the inspiration of the Spirit of God, has now become the object of so much thought and prayer.

A second reason arises from the condition of things within the Church of England itself. Our Lord ordained two Sacraments of the Gospel, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Neither in any recorded words of His nor in any official formulary of the Church is there a hint that one of these is to be placed in a position of greater importance than the other. Yet, through the operation of various causes, it has resulted that the Lord's Supper is thought a great deal more about than Baptism. One cause is unavoidable. Baptism takes place but once in a man's life; he receives the Lord's Supper many times. That which he does constantly in mature life he naturally thinks more about than that which is done to him once in his infancy. The other chief cause is to some extent avoidable, and therefore those who permit it to operate cannot be exonerated from all blame. The introductory rubric to the Baptism Service for Infants distinctly says "that it is most convenient that Baptism should not be administered but upon Sundays and other Holy Days, when the most number of people come together." These are precisely the occasions when it is now generally found to be most inconvenient (in the modern sense of the word) to administer Baptism, and the Sacrament is therefore very commonly relegated to week-days or quiet intervals on Sundays. The result is, that there are many in our so-called Christian England who are almost ignorant of the ceremonies of Baptism. What matters more is, that there are many regular Churchpeople in all ranks of society who have only very vague ideas, if they have any ideas at all, about the inner meaning of Baptism. The following chapters are an attempt to explain that meaning in simple and untechnical language. Their object is, first of all, to enable Churchpeople to understand for themselves what was done for them when they were baptized; and, secondly, to enable them to pass that knowledge on to the numerous thoughtful and inquiring men and women who unfortunately do not usually take any part in the public worship of God.

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THE MEANING OF HOLY BAPTISM

I

THE GATEWAY OF THE CHURCH

It will be helpful to prepare the way for our discussion by watching in imagination the course of a Baptism Service. We notice at the outset who is there. The most conspicuous person is the minister, arrayed in his surplice and other robes. Beside him is the candidate for Baptism, who in this country is usually an infant or small child, but is sometimes an adult. There is also a group of friends, some of whom, called Godparents, have a little part to play in the Service. All of them gather round the Font, in which some water has previously been placed.

The Service consists partly of prayers and readings, partly of ceremonies. The ceremonies naturally strike the attention first. At a certain point in the Service the minister takes the infant or child into his arms—or in the case of an adult holds him by his right hand—and, having asked what is to be his Christian name, addresses him by it with the words "I baptize thee In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," at the same time pouring some of the water upon his head. Next he makes the sign of the Cross upon his forehead with water, using at the same time the words "We receive this child [or person] into the congregation of Christ's flock, and do sign him with the sign of the Cross, in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end." It is a natural consequence of these words that, at the close of the Service at the font, an entry of the newly baptized person's name (together with the names of his parents and of the officiating minister and the date of his Baptism) is made in the Register of Baptisms of the Parish.

Here, then, at the outset is one plain meaning of the Service. At his Baptism a person is enrolled among the professed followers of Jesus Christ. He receives upon him the mark of discipleship. He is made a member of that Society of followers of Jesus Christ which we call the Church. Every privilege which belongs to members of that Society becomes his by right. We do not at this point raise any of the more difficult questions upon which something must be said later. We do not ask, for instance, whether it is possible to be a real follower of Jesus Christ without being baptized: we simply look to the broad fact that there exists in the world a Society of people who are at least professedly united by their belief in Jesus Christ, and we note that Baptism is the condition of membership in that Society. The membership of the Society is precisely measured by the Baptismal roll. It is of course true that the Society has many branches, and that these branches are in some respects dissimilar. Some, for instance, may be Episcopalian in their form of Church government, some may be Presbyterian, some may be Congregational. But the Church as a whole, in the institutional sense in which we are for the moment using the term, consists of the baptized members of all its branches. Thus, a man who is baptized in the Church of England becomes immediately a member of the Church of England, and thereby a member of the whole Church of Christ. This is the first effect of Baptism.

The Baptism Service, however, makes it clear that something more is involved than a mere entrance into a visible Society. When a man joins a society, it is at any rate expected of him that he will live up to his membership, not only sharing in its privileges, but also performing its duties. Expectations are no doubt bitterly disappointed in the case of most societies, and the list of defaulting members is not uncommonly a long one. Nevertheless expectations are formed, and admission to membership is given on the assumption that a real attempt will be made to fulfil them. It is precisely the same with the Society of Christ's disciples. The baptized person is expected to live up to his membership: "We receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock, and do sign him with the sign of the Cross, in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified."

It is here that a difference begins to be manifested between membership in the Church and in other societies. They are human throughout. This is divine. Membership in the Church is expected to involve a direct relationship between the baptized person and the Lord Jesus Christ, and no number of cases of dis-

appointment and failure can remove the expectation. In other words, Baptism is declared to have two sides to it, an inward and an outward. Outwardly there is the membership of the visible Society, consequent upon the visible sign of Baptism with water. Inwardly there is a relationship to Jesus Christ, the nature of which we have yet to discover. It is because of this two-sided character that the Prayer Book defines Baptism as a Sacrament. "How many parts are there in a Sacrament?" is asked in the Catechism; and the answer is given, "Two: the outward visible sign, and the inward spiritual grace." [We just notice in passing that the word Baptism becomes capable of bearing two different meanings. It may stand only for the external ceremony of washing with water. It may stand for that ceremony regarded in close connection with and as involving its inner spiritual significance. Clearly we shall get into confusion unless we are careful to notice in what sense we are using the word.]

What, then, is this inner side of Baptism? We naturally expect to find some explanation in the prayers and readings of the Service, and it is at these that we must now look more closely. "I baptize thee In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Without stopping for the present to investigate the full meaning of this formula, we see at a glance that the baptized person is intended to be brought into some relationship with the Holy Trinity. The relationship involves him in duties. He is "to fight manfully under Christ's banner against sin, the world, and the devil." Accordingly, he is asked to make, either with his own lips or through the lips of his Godparents, certain promises as a condition of Baptism: promises of faith in God, of obedience to His Will, and of renunciation of all that is inconsistent therewith. But a survey of the prayers as a whole makes it clear that, as in the outward sphere the person who is baptized has something done to him, so in the spiritual sphere the stress is laid, not upon what he does and is to do, but upon what is done to him. His being baptized is expected to have its parallel in his receiving a spiritual gift, to which is given the name of Regeneration, or New Birth.

It is worth while to make some quotations to show that the thought in the prayers entirely turns on Regeneration. Take the familiar, because commonly used, Service for "the Ministration of Public Baptism of Infants." It begins with a paragraph containing the assertion "Our Saviour Christ saith, None can enter into the Kingdom of God, except he be regenerate and born anew of Water and of the Holy Ghost"—words which are roughly quoted

from our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus in St. John iii. 5. After this paragraph follow two prayers, in the second of which the congregation ask that the children to be baptized "may receive remission of their sins by spiritual Regeneration." When the rite of Baptism has been administered, the Priest makes a declaration "that this child is regenerate and grafted into the Body of Christ's Church." Finally comes a prayer: "We yield Thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased Thee to regenerate this infant with Thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for Thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into Thy Holy Church. And humbly we beseech Thee to grant that he, being dead unto sin, and living unto righteousness, and being buried with Christ in His death, may crucify the old man and utterly abolish the whole body of sin."

In the Service for the Baptism of Persons of Riper Years the first three of these quotations are repeated in practically identical terms. The fourth of necessity appears in a rather different form: "Give Thy Holy Spirit to these persons, that, being now born again, and made heirs of everlasting salvation, through our Lord Jesus Christ, they may continue Thy servants and attain Thy promises." It is, then, Regeneration which lies closest to the heart of the Service. It is Regeneration, and not the ceremonial of Baptism, which is of its very essence. At the beginning there is the solemn statement of the necessity of Regeneration. Towards the end, in response to solemn prayer, Regeneration is asserted in some undefined way to have been effected. Last comes a prayer for its continuance.

We are thus faced in our search into the meaning of Baptism by the need for a thorough investigation of the exact significance of the word Regeneration.

Now the Service begins with an appeal to a definite passage of Holy Scripture. We are thereby reminded that our Prayer Book as it stands comes from the hands of men who made it their boast that their beliefs were based upon direct appeal to Scripture. We shall, therefore, be walking in the surest way to understand their meaning if, as the first stage of our inquiry, we examine the Bible teaching upon the subject of Regeneration.

II

THE HEAVENLY BIRTH

Among all the passages of Scripture which refer to Regeneration one stands out pre-eminent. It is found in the third chapter of St. John's Gospel, and forms part of a celebrated conversation which took place between our Lord Jesus Christ and Nicodemus the Pharisee. It will be worth while to dwell at length upon this passage, and to seek to understand it more clearly by looking at the setting in which it is placed.

The scene of the conversation was Jerusalem, and the time the great Feast of the Passover. Faithful Jews had come crowding up to the Holy City from far and near to keep the Feast. Some had wended their way from Galilee and the north down the Jordan valley, others had come from the great Jewish colonies in Egypt by way of the trade route across the desert. Every house in Jerusalem had opened its guest-chamber as a matter of course to give hospitality to the pilgrims, and the space within the city walls was crowded to its utmost capacity. Those who had not been fortunate enough to find accommodation in this way had sought it for themselves as best they could on the hills round about, and the slopes were dotted with their tents.

Passover crowds were always naturally excited. But in this year—it was probably A.D. 26 or 27—there was a special cause of excitement. A new popular Preacher had appeared from Galilee. John the Baptist had been wonderful enough; indeed, his work was not yet done, for he was still to be found near the banks of Jordan, and men and women were still going out to hear him and to receive his Baptism. But this new Preacher, Jesus by name, was quite outshining John in the brilliance of His doings. Moreover, the remarkable thing was that John, so far from being jealous of the new arrival, had evidently expected Jesus to come, and was quite prepared to give up the place of pre-eminence to Him. He had gone so far as to describe himself merely as a Voice and as a preparer of the way for Jesus,

and to say of Jesus, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Report had been brought down from Galilee by some of the pilgrims, whose homes were in the neighbourhood of Cana, that Jesus had worked a wonderful miracle to help out a distressed host at a marriage feast in that place. It was being whispered, too, that He had done some extraordinary things in Jerusalem during the Passover days, and that those who had seen them done were inclined to fix their hopes on Him as their national deliverer. These miraculous signs had arrested attention, and caused men to pay special heed to His public addresses and private conversations. The main burden of all He had to say was the great subject of the day—the coming of the Kingdom of God. Every loyal Jew thought about that. Every one had his ideas about it. It was natural, then, that there should be general curiosity to know what this new Teacher had to say on the matter.

Interest in Jesus had even penetrated to the exclusive circles of the religious leaders, or Rabbis. One of these, a particularly earnest and thoughtful man called Nicodemus, determined to approach Jesus personally and to have a discussion with Him on the Kingdom of God. But he did not care to go openly by day. His own pride as a Rabbi made him hesitate a little to be seen publicly questioning Jesus, and thereby giving an apparent endorsement to the teaching qualifications of one who was a mere provincial, and had not been through the Rabbinic Schools. He determined therefore to go by night. Accordingly he made inquiry in what house Jesus was staying for the Passover—it was possibly a house belonging to John the Evangelist or his relatives—and then after dark he went to the house and climbed up the outer staircase to the guest-chamber on the flat roof. Let us try to imagine the two face to face—the young Teacher from Galilee deeply taught by the Spirit of God through the text-books of Nature and of the Old Testament, and the older teacher of the Law, trained in all the nice minutiæ of the Biblical Commentaries of many generations of Scribes.

Nicodemus began with a graceful compliment, giving to Jesus the coveted title of Rabbi: "Rabbi, we know that Thou art a Teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him." Then—as the narrative in St. John iii. undoubtedly implies, though it does not directly state—he introduced the subject of the Kingdom of God.

Now Nicodemus certainly thought that the Kingdom of God

was a very glorious thing, and he was eagerly looking forward to its arrival. We do not know precisely what his ideas about it were. It is quite possible that he had no clear ideas about it at all, and that for this very reason he wanted to talk the matter over with Jesus. For among the Jews of that day very various theories were held about the Kingdom and its coming. They were fairly well agreed that it was coming by an intervention of God, that He would visit His people Israel, delivering them from their enemies so that they might serve Him without hindrance. But opinion was sharply divided as to whether this Divine intervention was to come along ordinary human lines or was to be of a novel and miraculous character. There was a corresponding uncertainty about the Messiah. Was He to be such as the older prophets had foretold, a greater Son of David born at Bethlehem; or was He to be a strictly supernatural being, reserved at present in Heaven and descending in due time to earth from the clouds? Which of these views, or what combination of them Nicodemus held, we cannot say. But, at any rate, it is clear that he thought that the Kingdom of God was worth seeing, and that he was prepared to take trouble to find out what it would probably be like, if haply he might the better make sure of seeing it.

The reply of Jesus to his question was that a man can only see the Kingdom of God upon certain conditions, that vision of its beauty depends upon the possession of certain moral qualities. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." This statement at the outset would tend to puzzle Nicodemus, partly because of his doubtless politically coloured ideas of the Kingdom, partly because of the notion rooted in the minds of all Pharisees and most other Jews that privileges were their right because they were children of Abraham.

It is perhaps easier for us to understand Christ's remark because we have His ideas of the Kingdom fixed in our minds. We think of the Kingdom mostly in moral and religious terms, as a state of life where God rules the hearts of men, where peace and purity and love are the predominant human characteristics, where men walk in daily fellowship with God and sin is put away. Such a Kingdom can clearly only be seen and understood by people whose hearts are rightly disposed. They see its beauties; to others it appears unattractive and even repulsive. It is thus somewhat similar to a church full of stained glass. If we walk round the outside, the glass looks dull and drab. But if we go inside the building, and see the glass as the sunlight

comes streaming through it, all the glory of its design and the richness of its colouring stand fully revealed.

Nicodemus, however, had not our advantages, and he was simply bewildered. He was a Jew, a Pharisee, a leader of authority in religion. What could Jesus mean by speaking to him about a second birth? "How can a man be born when he is old?" he asked. His bewilderment was just that which is natural to the conventionally religious mind, the mind which conceives religion more as a set of respectable habits than as a vital experience. He was even driven for a moment to consider whether Jesus could possibly mean anything so obviously absurd as that a man should undergo a second physical birth from his mother. Jesus therefore explained His meaning more clearly: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

In other words, Jesus distinguished two kinds of life. There is a fleshly life which we possess in virtue of our natural birth. There is a spiritual life imparted to us by the Spirit of God in what may be called by analogy a second birth. Only those who are possessed of the latter can see the Kingdom of God.

It will be noticed that Jesus said "born of water and of the Spirit." That His emphasis lies on the birth of the Spirit is proved by the fact that in a later verse, where He is describing spiritual life, He refers to this only, omitting any reference to a birth by water. As we shall see later on,[1] the New Testament does recognize such a thing as a birth by water, but it only occupies a secondary place. The prime essential is birth of the Spirit. This is the indispensable condition of seeing the Kingdom of God. Now a Birth of the Spirit, or New Birth, and Regeneration are equivalent terms.

Let us grapple more closely with the question what this Birth of the Spirit exactly is. The processes of bodily life suggest the answer. By its natural birth a baby is introduced into a new world, where it enters upon new relationships. The Birth of the Spirit must therefore be some radical change in a man's character and outlook, effected by the working of the Spirit of God, whereby he enters upon a new kind of life amid new relationships. Are changes, radical enough to deserve the description of New Birth, possible and actual in human life?

[1] See Chapter IX.

Let us look, first, at the question of possibility, and help ourselves by means of another illustration. Let us suppose that two men are sitting in a concert-room listening to the rendering of a piece of classical music. One of them is absorbed in following it, and his expression is one of whole-hearted attention and keen enjoyment. The other listens for a few minutes; then his attention flags: he begins to look about at the other people, at the ceiling and furniture; he shifts uneasily in his seat; his face clearly shows that he is intensely bored by the whole thing, and that his chief desire is to get outside. Why is there this difference? The first man is intensely musical. His natural aptitude for music has been exercised and developed by his presence at concerts and his association with musical people, and consequently he is understanding, following and enjoying the piece which is being rendered. The other man has no musical taste or knowledge, and the piece is to him hardly more than a meaningless succession of sounds. He does not understand it and he does not enjoy it. He may be a brilliant mathematician or a skilful mechanic, but he is not musical. He would be content to sit for hours wrestling with a mathematical problem or examining in minutest detail a piece of machinery. But at a concert there is no question that he is out of his element.

There has been no better example of the second type of man than Charles Darwin. His name will live for centuries as a student of natural history, as a keen scientist who, after years of patient investigation, exploration and comparison, was one of the two who first formulated the doctrine of evolution of natural species. But Darwin towards the end of his life would have been like a fish out of water in an art-gallery or a concert-room. He confessed that his taste for music and art had entirely gone. What taste he may have possessed in earlier years had gradually disappeared for want of exercise and development.

What would have to happen to such a man before he could become musical? Remember in the first instance that musical taste is not a separate faculty in human nature. It cannot be so simply separated from other tastes or traits as a man's arm can be from his leg. Musical taste is simply a certain combination and disposition of the ordinary faculties of thought and emotion. This means that no normal person is altogether without musical taste. There is at any rate the capacity for it in him, even though that capacity is as little likely to develop into anything readily noticeable as a weakly plant is likely to grow to maturity in unfavourable surroundings. But since he has the capacity, it follows that if he

were put into the right surroundings, and educated in the right way, that capacity would grow into some sort of a musical taste, and he would thereby enter into the musical world. Oratorios which otherwise would have been unintelligible and uninteresting would at any rate meet with some appreciation and cause some enjoyment.

Now this illustration would seem to be a real help towards understanding both the possibility and the nature of a New Birth. Just as there is a musical world, so is there a religious world. This religious world has its centre in the being of God, and its contents are all those facts and qualities which are the result of God's existence and God's character, of His dealings with man and of man's fellowship with Him. This religious world has its marvellous beauties and delights corresponding to those of the musical world. But as in the one case, so in the other, some people seem entirely insensible to them and have no appreciation of them. Men may have other human qualities and gifts in rich abundance. They may be strong in body, keen in brain, rich in artistic talent, and yet dull to religion. Such men are contrasted with religious men by St. Paul as being respectively natural and spiritual, and he writes in 1 Cor. ii. 14 that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." This insensibility to God would seem to be partly a matter of heredity and partly a matter of education and conduct. There is no doubt that a life of sin deadens the appreciation of Divine truth and beauty. A man can do much therefore to minimize the taste for religion in himself. Christ's words in St. John vii. 17, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine," have their distinct application here. But not only may a man make it more difficult for himself to appreciate God; by the law of heredity he may make it more difficult for his children. A man's capacity for fellowship with God may have been lessened by the sins of his forefathers. It is this fact which seems to be referred to in the introductory words of the Baptismal Service: "Dearly beloved, forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin; and that our Saviour Christ saith, None can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, except he be regenerate."

Yet, as we have argued that no man is without the capacity for musical taste, so much more certainly no man is without the capacity for religion. The great saying of St. Augustine, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O God, and our heart is restless until it find rest in Thee," means in the first instance that the ultimate satisfaction of human desires is only to be found in fellowship

with God, but it implies thereby that we have the desires in question. This is proved also by the universal existence of some sort of religion in all races of mankind, an argument which is in no way weakened by the existence of some apparently exceptional individuals within those races. But this capacity for religion is everywhere imperfectly developed. In some races like the Hindus of India, there is a keen sense of the existence of spiritual beings, but a most inadequate idea of the real nature of God. In Western races, tinged with materialism, the very sense of the existence of God is fainter. All men need to have their faculty for religion developed and educated, and to enter into true fellowship with the one true God. When this has been done, they will have entered into a new world. They will have attained to the appreciation of a new range of beauty. Their new life may then be well compared to the new life of the man who has become musical, or to the new experience of the man who has entered into a cathedral to see its stained glass. Finally, the act or process—we use both words advisedly for the present—whereby entrance is made into this new life, may fitly be compared to the act or process whereby a baby enters into this material world.

But what is the power whereby this change takes place? According to Jesus Christ, the power is the Holy Spirit. He is the Giver of life. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth." He it is Who opens men's eyes so that they apprehend the reality and the true nature of God. He introduces men to the world of spiritual life.

All experience goes to prove that this change in men is not only possible, but is a fact of common occurrence. Examples are to be seen for the looking, though not all are as conspicuous as that, for instance, wherein John Bunyan, the swearing tinker of Bedford, became John Bunyan, the saintly author of *Pilgrim's Progress*. But yet the fact is a mystery. We do not, and cannot, understand it. We need, then, our Lord's reminder to Nicodemus, that because a fact is a mystery it is not necessary to deny that it is a fact. Jesus gives an illustration suggested by the identity of the words for "wind" and "spirit." Nobody can see the wind: nobody can lay down the laws of its action; but nobody is foolish enough to deny its existence. Its existence is proved by its effects. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The New Birth is a mystery. The secret of its method is hidden from us, though we have tried to make guesses at partial explanation by

analogy. But the spiritual life which a man possesses after his New Birth can be seen unmistakably manifested in the open fields of character and conduct.

To the regenerate man many things, if not all things, become new. Love becomes dominant. Saintly men become interesting. Prayer becomes the supreme duty and privilege. The Bible becomes a mine of treasure. There is no mistaking the man who has really passed through the experience of Regeneration.

The New Birth is at once so simple and so mysterious that men fail to grasp what it is. Nicodemus was still puzzled in spite of Christ's suggestions towards explanation. The idea was too novel for him to take in all at once, though before we part company with him in the Gospel story we seem to see clear proof that the idea sank into his mind at last. In St. John iii., however, Nicodemus is left still wondering. "Nicodemus answered and said unto Him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you of earthly things, and ye believe not how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?"

III

SOME FACETS OF THE DIAMOND

In the preceding chapter we have studied the difficult passage in St. John's Gospel where Jesus Christ sets forth, under the figure of New Birth, the great spiritual change that must needs come over a man if he is to see the Kingdom of God. The phrase in the original Greek is not quite certain of interpretation, and some translators would render it by "New Birth," others by "Birth from above." Happily both renderings are true; indeed, they are expressive of two sides of a great truth. One rendering emphasizes the newness of the character of the life which is entered upon: the other emphasizes the important and mysterious fact that the Birth is the result of the activity of God's Holy Spirit.

The word Regeneration, as has been already pointed out, means the same thing as New Birth. It is not, however, used in the passage in St. John iii. But there are places in the New Testament where it occurs, and it is fitting that we should supplement our examination of our Lord's words to Nicodemus by gathering any fresh light from these passages which they can supply. Moreover, the great spiritual change which we have learnt to know as New Birth may be looked at from other points of view. It may be described under quite different metaphors and illustrated in quite different ways. This means that there are in the New Testament a number of phrases which bear practically the same meaning as New Birth, and help us to understand more clearly the spiritual experience which it denotes. It is the purpose of the present chapter to bring these phrases, or at any rate the more important of them, into connection with one another.

1. We will first look at some passages in other writers than St. John where the analogy of *birth* is used. In James i. 18 we read "of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures." St. James is here looking forward to a complete renewal of the whole

creation, when all traces of the decay which has resulted from the introduction of sin into the world shall have been entirely removed. He is not alone in this expectation, for his words have their parallel in St. Paul's writings in the famous passage in Rom. viii. 19–21: "The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. . . . Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." St. James thinks of this New Birth of all creation as foreshadowed in and pledged by the New Birth of its firstfruits—the company of Christian people. Of this New Birth he says that God is the cause, and that the instrument which He employs is the "word of truth." The thought is further developed in the twenty-first verse: "Lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." This verse makes two other points clear. It shows that St. James also thinks of God's activity as taking the form of the planting of a seed which quickens the soul into life—an idea which was no doubt suggested to him by our Lord's parable of the Sower. It also shows that St. James recognized the very important fact, upon which much more will be said in a later chapter, that, although the great spiritual change is due to the activity of God, yet the soul is not passive as a child is at its birth; on the contrary, it is active, and the change can be and for certain purposes must be described as a human activity.

The idea of the New Birth is also to be found in the First Epistle of St. Peter. He says in chap. i., verse 3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Similarly in verses 22 and 23 we read: "See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." Moreover, like St. James, St. Peter follows up his reference to the Divine activity by a reference to the human, adding at the beginning of chap. ii.: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." St. Peter's expressions form a connecting link between St. James and St. Paul. He has St. James' thoughts that God is the Author of the New Birth,

that He effects it by the planting of a seed, the incorruptible seed of the Word of God "which by the Gospel is preached unto you," and that there is a human side to the proceeding. His reference to the "incorruptible inheritance" may even be taken as an allusion to the general renovation of heaven and earth of which St. James spoke. On the other hand, St. Peter connects the New Birth with the resurrection of Christ. He describes the resurrection of Christ as its instrument in verse 3 exactly as he describes the Word of God as its instrument in verse 23. We are thus naturally led on to describe the spiritual change wholly in terms of resurrection.

2. Before we discuss this description, however, it may perhaps be better to refer to another analogy found in St. Paul's writings which is very closely similar to that of the New Birth, namely *adoption.* It is found four times. Two of these are in the eighth chapter of Romans. In verse 15 we have: "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." In verse 23 we have: "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." The next passage is in Gal. iv. 4–6: "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Finally, we have Eph. i. 5: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children [R.V. sons] by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will."

When the figure of birth is used, the main thought is of the kinship between him who begets and him who is begotten, and the natural word to describe the one who is begotten is the word "child." Now St. Paul does, indeed, use the word child. He uses it in the verse from the Epistle to the Romans which has just been quoted. He uses it in Eph. v. 1: "Be ye, therefore, imitators of God, as dear children." He even speaks of his converts as his children in the faith. Thus he calls Timothy "my true child in the faith" (1 Tim. i. 2). He says of his Corinthian converts: "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel" (1 Cor. iv. 15). But there can be no doubt that St. Paul had a preference for the word "son" over the word "child," and

that he liked to speak of God adopting us as sons rather than begetting us as children.

The word "son" to St. Paul suggests the privilege and dignity of our relationship to God. He therefore connects it immediately in Rom. viii. 17 with the rights of inheritance. The metaphor of adoption was a very natural one for the Apostle of the Gentiles to use, especially in a letter to Rome. For in Roman social life adoption was a very common ceremony. There was a particular legal procedure which had to be complied with, and adoption carried with it definite legal and social effects. It may help to fill the analogy with fuller meaning if we describe briefly what these were. The Romans maintained in a very extreme form the rights of fathers over their children. These rights did not cease when the sons came of age, nor even when they married and had families of their own, but they lasted as long as the father lived. The only way in which a man could be delivered from the authority of his father was by being adopted as son by somebody else. This ceremony of transference from one family to another was in form a sale, the original father acting as the seller and the new father as the purchaser. In the old ritual of adoption there was a solemn striking of a pair of scales with a piece of copper as a sign of purchase; and, as a matter of fact, there was no difference in the procedure whether a man parted with his son or his slaves. When a man had been adopted in this way into the family of a new father, he was put into exactly the same position as a son by birth. He shared the same privileges and owed the same obligations. It is easy to see how attractive a metaphor adoption would be to an Apostle who was able to write elsewhere: "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. See also vii. 23).

It is well to notice how strongly the Divine activity is insisted on in the passages which speak of adoption. In Rom. viii. 15, the A.V. prints "Spirit of adoption," giving a direct reference to the Holy Spirit, while the R.V. reads "spirit of adoption," using the word "spirit" in the sense of "temper," a certain disposition of the human spirit. But in any case the human spirit is here thought of as controlled by the Divine, for in the preceding verse St. Paul has laid it down that only those are sons of God who are "led by the Spirit of God." [In the sixteenth verse the phrase "the Spirit beareth witness with our spirit" is a clear reference to the presence of two witnesses at a Roman ceremony of adoption.] Similarly in the twenty-third verse the Spirit is repre-

sented as the agent in the gradual process of the redemption of soul and body. It is the same in Gal. iv. 6: "God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son."

The meaning, then, of adoption as sons as applied to the life of the soul is clear. It denotes a spiritual experience wherein, as a result of the activity of the Spirit of God, the soul passes out of a position of subjection to the powers of evil into a position of subjection to God, into a new family life where it enjoys abundant privileges and assumes new responsibilities. The spiritual experience is clearly the same as that which is suggested in the metaphor of "New Birth," but the new metaphor casts new light upon it. Adoption represents the experience as a change of position, New Birth rather as a change of nature.

3. We pass on to notice a group of passages where the contrast between the old and the new is expressed as a contrast between *death and life*. In this connection St. Paul hovers between allusions to the Creation and to the Resurrection.

He has the Creation quite clearly in mind in 2 Cor. iv. 6: "God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Similarly we read in Eph. iv. 24: "Put on the new man, which after God" [*i.e.* according to the Divine intention and pattern] "is created in righteousness and true holiness." There is also the phrase "new creature": "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"; "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15. See also Eph. ii. 10).

But the passages where the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is in mind are more striking than these. Thus in Eph. ii. 4-6, St. Paul says: "God, Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." There is a closely similar passage in Col. ii. 12, 13: "Buried with Christ in Baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through faith in the working [R.V.] of God, who hath raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses." To these we may add the verses (Rom. vi. 3-5): "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by

baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection."

There is good reason why St. Paul should have laid stress upon this illustration of the change in the soul which we are considering. His own spiritual experience had not been of that natural and normal character which one would describe as a birth. There had been an element of the sudden and miraculous about it. Moreover it was directly due to his interview with the Risen Christ. It is very likely that he had come across Jesus in the days of His flesh. As a pupil of Gamaliel, he must surely have been at Jerusalem during at any rate part of our Lord's ministry. He would know the outlines of His career. He may even have been present at the trial before the Sanhedrin. But all this experience of Jesus, if we are right in assigning it to him, left him unmoved. It was the unexpected and unescapable vision of the Risen Christ in all His ascended glory which finally convinced St. Paul, and effected that sudden yet complete revolution in his life and outlook which changed him from Saul the persecutor into Paul the missionary. The Risen Christ meant everything to him. What was more natural, then, than that he should find expression for the experience of his soul in terms of the historical experiences of Jesus Christ? The dead body of Jesus Christ was laid in the grave: but on the third day God gave it new life and raised it up for a new and glorious career, freed from much of the weakness and limitation to which it had been subject before. So there was an "old man" known as Saul. In God's sight he was dead in trespasses and sins; he did not possess the true spiritual life of fellowship with God. That "old man" was buried, finally put away in the grave—the ritual of Baptism by total immersion, where the person being baptized was plunged altogether beneath the surface of the water, helped to give a vivid realization to the idea—Saul was buried with Christ in Baptism. But then, as God raised up Christ on the third day, so God raised up Saul's soul, gave it life and started it out on a new career of fellowship with Him. By an act of moral and spiritual resurrection, Saul ceased to be an "old man" and became a "new man," a "new creature." The parallel between the physical experience of Christ and the moral experience of St. Paul was, of course, greatly helped by the fact that Christ's death and resurrection were of central importance in God's plan for the spiritual renewal of all mankind.

Before we finally leave this third analogy of the great spiritual change, it may be helpful to look at it in connection with the two which have preceded it. All three analogies are closely allied, and yet the emphasis in each is different. In the Resurrection analogy, the stress lies on the gift of new life. The soul is quickened. The dormant possibilities of spiritual life are galvanized into active existence. In the Adoption analogy, this thought is only in the background, and the main idea is the passing of the soul into a new sphere of dignity and privilege. In the analogy of Birth both ideas are in the foreground. Birth signifies both the quickening into life of that which previously had no life, and also the entrance of the living being upon a new world.

4. The next great analogy—and this also is typically Pauline—is led up to in the verse already quoted from Col. ii.: "You, being dead in your sins . . . hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses." The gift of new life to the soul is bound up with the *forgiveness of sins*. Now St. Paul's special way of describing the forgiveness of sins is by use of the term Justification. Justification by faith is perhaps his most famous contribution to the statement of Christian theology. The analogy is drawn from the courts of law. St. Paul thinks of God as sitting in judgment upon each man. Man comes before Him with a guilty conscience. He only deserves condemnation. But he flings himself in despair for safety upon the merits of Jesus Christ. He pins his faith to Him as Saviour. In response to this act of faith God reckons the sinner as righteous, He counts him as being what at the moment he is not, but what he is capable of becoming in virtue of the transforming effects of his faith in Christ. The great exposition of this truth is in the Epistle to the Romans: "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood" (iii. 23–25). Of course St. Paul does not think it possible for justification to stand alone in real life, even though he necessarily isolates it for his purposes of argument with the Judaizing Christians who preached that man could earn his own salvation. He is most careful to insist, in the following chapters of Romans, that in a Christian's normal life justification must immediately lead on to sanctification, by which he there means the gradual growth of actual righteousness in the justified soul under the influence of the Holy Spirit. He also shows that a man who has been justified and is being sanctified is at peace with God, he is living in fellow-

ship with God, and nothing can separate him from the love of God. He is in fact living the life of a child of God, and St. Paul passes on quite naturally in the development of his argument in Romans from justification to the analogies of resurrection and adoption which we have already considered.

It is most convenient to refer here to another great term of St. Paul, which provides a slightly different expression for the fact of forgiveness—the term Reconciliation. Its most important occurrence is in 2 Cor. v. 18, 19, where it follows immediately upon a use of the phrase "new creature": "All things are of God, Who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing [R.V. reckoning] their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the work of reconciliation." The idea of the word is clearly that God and man have been estranged from each other, that human sin has caused them to fall out, and that Jesus Christ has so satisfactorily dealt with the sin that He has brought God and man together again as friends.

Justification, reconciliation, forgiveness, and other words which might be gathered from St. Paul's writings all emphasize from slightly different sides the truth that the great spiritual change in a man's soul includes the removal of the guilt of his past sins. The discussion of these words, and the exact shades of difference between them, need not occupy us further, because we are mainly concerned with the metaphors of New Birth and its immediate associates, adoption and quickening. But the group of words which bring out the thought of forgiveness must not be left out of sight. They form an essential corrective to what might easily be a misunderstanding of the idea of New Birth. They show us clearly that when we speak of the New Birth of a soul, we are only speaking of the quickening into life of dormant faculties within a soul which had a previous existence and career: only its previous career was on different lines, and different faculties and habits were dominant. The death and the life are really two states of a soul which has a continuous existence throughout. We shall see this fact brought out more plainly still when we look at the human side of Regeneration.

5. We have purposely left till last an examination of the two places in the New Testament where the word *Regeneration* itself occurs. We may prepare the way for a study of them by inquiring in what sense the word was used outside the Bible. It is found in some interesting connections. The old Pythagorean

philosophers in Greece and elsewhere who believed, like the Hindus in India to-day, that souls inhabit one body after another in endless succession, used to call the appearance of a soul in its new body a Regeneration. The Roman stoics of our Lord's day used to speak of the Regeneration of the world in spring-time when Nature woke up from her winter sleep. The Jewish writer Josephus calls the restoration of the Jews after the Babylonian captivity the "Regeneration of the Fatherland." These instances all show, what we should have expected, that Regeneration in current speech meant simply an entry upon a new kind of life which in some radical way differed from the previous life.

The first occurrence of the word Regeneration in the New Testament is in St. Matthew xix. 28. Jesus there says to His disciples, "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me, in the Regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." In this verse the word clearly refers to something which is to take place when the Messiah comes in glory. It probably denotes the creation of a new heaven and a new earth. There is some evidence that this was a common expectation among the Jews. For instance, in a Jewish book written about the time of our Lord's life (Apocalypse of Baruch xxxii. 6), it is said that "the mighty one will renew His creation." The word therefore refers to the great future renovation of the whole universe to which St. Paul also looked forward, and of which he regarded the New Birth of Christians as the firstfruits. But the verse from St. Matthew has no close connection with the Regeneration of the soul, and may therefore be passed over.

The other place where the word occurs is Titus iii. 4–7, and this is a passage of the first importance. It runs as follows: "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of Regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour: that, being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." We notice here that Regeneration and Justification are brought into close connection. Justification is assumed to have taken place for the soul that has been made regenerate. The connection thus established reminds us of and confirms the very similar connection already noticed between quickening and forgiveness in Col. ii. 13: "You, being dead in your sins . . . hath He quickened, together with Him, having

forgiven you all trespasses." We notice also a connection established between Baptism and Regeneration. This connection must be discussed separately in a later chapter, and illustrated and defined by other passages from Scripture.

The main point of the passage from Titus is that God saved us by Regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. The two terms are evidently akin to each other. As the great Dr. Waterland once expressed it, they are "nearly allied in end and use, of one and the same original, often going together and perfective of each other." On the other hand, there would seem to be some slight difference between them. The Greek word for "renewing," like the word for "Regeneration," only comes twice in the New Testament, namely, in this passage and in Rom. xii. 2. The corresponding verb also occurs twice, in 2 Cor. iv. 16, and Col. iii. 10. Its meaning can be very well gathered from Rom. xii. 2. St. Paul there writes: "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." The two verbs here are in the present tense, so that the Apostle has a continuous process in mind. The meaning therefore is that the renewing of the Christian's mind will effect a gradual transformation in his character, whereby he will become more and more unlike worldly people, and more and more like the pattern man, Jesus Christ.

Now, in Titus iii. 5, Regeneration, like renewal, is declared to be the work of the Holy Spirit: so much would seem to be plain from the general arrangement of the words. But Regeneration is connected with Baptism, and this is an act which takes place at a definite time and once for all. It would seem therefore to be a fair interpretation of the words to say that while Regeneration and renewal are both the work of the Holy Spirit, and are both concerned with the new kind of life upon which the Christian enters, yet Regeneration is a term more especially applicable to the beginning of that new life, and renewal to its continuance and expansion. In this case the teaching about Regeneration here is precisely identical with the teaching of other New Testament writers on the subject of New Birth. The suggested difference in meaning between Regeneration and renewal is excellently illustrated by a sentence in the Collect for Christmas Day in the Prayer Book, that "we being regenerate and made Thy children by adoption and grace may daily be renewed by Thy Holy Spirit."

The results of our survey may now be gathered together in the closing paragraph of this chapter. We have looked at various

expressions which describe in different ways the first stage of the Christian life. In New Birth or Regeneration it is the creative activity of the Holy Ghost which comes into prominence; in Quickening and Resurrection we are reminded that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Risen Christ: in Adoption we think particularly of the new world of privilege and responsibility into which the new-born soul enters: in Forgiveness we look back to the old life (or death) out of which the soul has passed. The descriptions are varied. It is good that they should be so. They allow for the variety of human experience. But underneath the different expressions lies a single great fact, and after all there is no more vivid description of this fact than the one which our Lord adopted when He said to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again."

IV

THE EARTHLY SIDE OF THE HEAVENLY BIRTH

The various expressions which we have seen in the preceding chapter to be practically identical with "New Birth" have this in common, that they all look upon it from its Divine side and emphasize the Divine activity. It is most important that this Divine aspect should not be lost sight of. On the other hand, it is possible for us to be so absorbed in it that we ignore the very existence of any other aspect. The metaphor of Regeneration is particularly liable to misrepresentation in this way, because we may easily be led into the supposition that the soul is as passive at its New Birth as an infant is at its natural birth. Now one passage quoted in the last chapter from St. James gives us just a hint that there is another aspect of the matter. The Apostle says "Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." The Word of God proclaimed in the Gospel is a life-giving force. As Jesus Christ said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." But the soul has to receive the word with meekness. That is to say, there is a human side in the process of Regeneration. There is a human activity which is complementary to and the reverse of the Divine. In the present chapter we must follow up this hint, and get clearly before our minds what the human activity is. The teaching on New Birth was given to Nicodemus, and it occurs in the Fourth Gospel. It was addressed to an educated man and a teacher of religion, and it occurs in the Gospel which is most full of theological teaching. The teaching of our Lord to the humbler folk who crowded round Him to hear His message is mostly recorded in the first three Gospels, and the remarkable thing about that teaching is that it contains no reference at all to the Regeneration of the soul; for, as we have seen in the one passage where the word Regeneration does occur, it refers to a future event on a world scale. This does not mean, however, that the great change in the attitude of the soul which we have been trying

to study was not much in the thoughts of the Lord Jesus. It simply means that He spoke of it in quite other terms.

We can best begin by noting a saying of Jesus recorded in St. Matthew xviii. 3, "Except ye be converted [R.V. Except ye turn] and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." There are two resemblances between this saying and the saying to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." In both cases an entry into the Kingdom of Heaven is said to be the object sought. Similarly in both cases the first clauses give us the conditions of entry. There is, moreover, a distinct approximation between being born again and becoming as little children. It would seem to be a fair conclusion from the comparison of these two sayings that being born again of the Spirit is the Divine aspect of a change in the soul, which on its human side is described as turning and becoming as little children.

The context in St. Matthew xviii. shows what was in our Lord's mind at the moment. The disciples had come to Him with a question, "Who is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" The question throws light upon the state of their minds and the character of their thoughts about Christ and His Kingdom. They were ambitious. They thought of Christ as being about to set up a kingdom in Palestine on political lines, and to bring in a new era of victory and prosperity for the Jewish nation. They felt that they had thrown in their lot with Him in the days of His weakness, and they were anxious to reap their due reward in the day of His power. The question of St. James and St. John about the places on His left and on His right hand in His Kingdom might have been asked by any of His disciples. Ambition, pride, self-seeking, joined with misunderstanding of His purely spiritual purposes, were the characteristic qualities of their minds. Jesus told them that they had to get rid of all these. They had to turn completely round, and let their hearts be full of thoughts of humility, trustfulness and innocence like little children. In short, they had to change their minds. The Authorized Version uses the phrase "be converted." This reads like a passive, as if the disciples needed to have something done to them. The phrase is unfortunate, and open to misunderstanding. The Revised Version has done good service in substituting the active verb "turn." The word "conversion" as popularly used to-day in religious speech has a certain vagueness about it, perhaps due to this very passage. We often speak of a man

being converted. It would be wiser to speak of him as converting, or turning; and, if we want to refer to what is done to him, to speak of him as being born again or regenerated. We do not in the least desire to abolish the word "conversion" from our religious vocabulary. Both the word and the thing need to be a great deal more dwelt on and preached about than they sometimes are. But it would certainly help to clearness of thought and to the removal of many difficulties on the subject if it were always carefully remembered that Conversion is an active process of the soul, and involves particularly the human will. No doubt the reason why our Lord dwelt mainly on this side of the matter is that His teaching was necessarily simple and practical.

. It has been said above that Regeneration and Conversion are simply the Divine and human aspects of the same process. They are therefore contemporaneous. Though the Spirit of God is at work and we must not ignore Him, yet the soul is not passive, but active, and all its faculties of thought, emotion, will and conscience are in full play. On the other hand, though a man's change of life may seem to be due simply to his own reflections and determination, yet doubtless the Spirit of God has been silently and secretly influencing him at the very foundations of his being. This identification of Regeneration and Conversion runs counter to a good deal of popular belief. Indeed there are a good many thoughtful Christians who make a distinction between the two. For instance, the late Archbishop Trench, of Dublin, came very near to making the distinction when he wrote in one of his books[1] "In Regeneration—not in the preparation for it, but in the act itself—the subject of it is passive, even as the child has nothing to do with its own birth." We can only state that, in our belief, the general tendency of Bible teaching is against the view; and, by way of naming one supporter of our opinion, we can quote the very high authority of the late Dr. Denney, of Glasgow, who wrote:[2] "It is one and the same experience which they (St. John and the writers of the earlier Gospels) respectively describe by these terms (namely, Regeneration and Conversion or Repentance). When that experience is regarded from the side of God, as something due to His Grace or Spirit, it is called Regeneration, a being born again, from above, of God; when it is regarded from the side of man, as an experience the responsibility for which lies with him, it is called Repentance. But we have no meaning or substance to put into either of these

[1] *N. T. Synonyms*, Section 18.

[2] Hastings's *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, II. p. 486*a*.

terms which does not equally belong to the other." Of course the identification naturally raises further questions as to the precise relation between the activities of the Divine Spirit and the workings of the human mind, between Divine providence or guidance and human freedom. But these questions are involved in every matter where God and man come into connection with each other, and there is no special need to attempt the impossible task of answering them here. The experience of Christian men has always seemed to them to be two-sided, to be due on the one hand to God's activity and on the other hand to their own, and they are generally and wisely content to leave the mystery unsolved. Meanwhile we may note as illustration the two lines of the familiar hymn—

> "Direct, control, suggest this day
> All I design or do or say:"

or the two ways of looking at the return of the Prodigal Son in our Lord's beautiful story. The Prodigal Son came to himself, reflected on his position, changed his mind and said "I will arise and go to my father." The father recognized the spiritual forces at work in the background when he said, "This my son was dead, and is alive again, was lost, and is found."

The noun "Conversion" is only used in one place in the New Testament, Acts xv. 3, where Paul and Barnabas are said to have gone on their way "declaring the conversion of the Gentiles." The spiritual reality underlying it is generally expressed by one or other of the two words "repentance" and "faith." Repentance and Conversion are brought together by St. Peter in Acts iii. 19, "Repent ye therefore and be converted [R. V. turn again]." The Parable of the Prodigal Son shows that Conversion is a turning in a double sense; it is a turning away from sin and a turning to God. In modern religious language we most commonly restrict "repentance" to the turning away from sin, and apply the word "faith" to the turning to God. There is a Biblical parallel, perhaps, to this in Acts xx. 21: "Testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." But for the most part "repentance" and "faith" are used in the New Testament in a large sense to cover both aspects of the turning. Repentance is the word used in the first three Gospels and in the early chapters of the Acts: "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand"; "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (St. Luke xxiv. 47); "Peter

said unto them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts ii. 38). On the other hand we have the word "faith" in Acts viii. 37, in Philip's saying to the man of Ethiopia: "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." But it is in St. John's Gospel that the word "faith" is specially prevalent, *e.g.* St. John iii. 36: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." In this and all similar passages it is plain that St. John includes in faith toward God a turning away from all that is displeasing to God. A man cannot believe in God in the full sense of committing himself trustfully to Him if he is at the same time holding on to sin. Faith is moral. This is the point of a verse like St. John v. 44: "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh from God only?"

The identification thus established between Regeneration and Conversion will have to be carefully borne in mind when we come to consider the language of the Baptismal Office. Meanwhile we may throw fresh light upon Regeneration by briefly referring to the fact of Conversion as we know it by experience to-day. Let us begin with a definition which will be recognized as true to fact. Conversion or repentance[1] "while it is a sense of regret or sorrow for the wrong-doings of the past, is far more. It is an agonizing desire, leading to an agonizing and persistent effort, to realize such a radical change in the state of the mind as will secure and ensure against wrong-doing in the future. Born of a realization, more or less clear and pungent, of our natural sinward tendency, and of our hopeless inability to correct it or control it, it impels us to desire above all things, and to seek before all things, that change of mind and moral condition which will not only lead us to choose righteousness, but also enable us triumphantly to realize righteousness." Now men and women are not all alike, and plainly such a large experience as this cannot be expected to take exactly the same form in all cases; and there are, as a matter of fact, several clearly recognizable and roughly distinguishable types of Conversion. The most commonly noticed distinction is between the sudden and the gradual types: but we can also distinguish between a painful and an easy, gentle type.

The sudden type is well illustrated in the New Testament; it is constantly found in all lands where a pioneer missionary work is going on; and indeed in all Christian lands, too, among those

[1] Hastings' *D.C.G.* II. 498*b*.

who are rescued from a life of active sinfulness and brought into the fold of Christ. The gradual type is the usual one among those who have been brought up from infancy in a Christian home, and surrounded from their earliest years by Christian influences. They are like Timothy in that from childhood they have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make them wise unto salvation. To them the process of turning to God and away from sin is like their growth, so natural that it is not observed, and can only be measured over long intervals. Yet the growth goes forward more quickly at some times than at others, and there is often a period in such lives, especially the period of Confirmation, when the process comes to a head and therefore to some extent becomes a sudden conversion.

The distinction between the painful and the easy types turns mainly on the prominence of the sense of sin, and therefore of the deep painful sense of the need of forgiveness. It is matter of common experience that to some Christians the feeling of sinfulness is very real and very distressing. Others, while not for a moment denying their sins, do not feel the burden of them. When sins have been committed, they bring them in a simple, trustful way to Christ to get them forgiven, but they do not know what it is to worry about them. It has been well remarked that the difference between the two types may be expressed by saying that in the former case repentance, in the latter case faith, is the more prominent.

If there are these varieties of Conversion, it follows that there are also these varieties of Regeneration. The New Birth becomes plainly a very large and variable experience. It will often be impossible to point to a particular time when it took place. We shall only be able to bring forward the evidence of a broad comparison between the present and the past as proof that it has taken place. But of course there will also be many cases where the process is sharp and summary, and both time and place can be confidently given. But the existence of these varieties does not at all affect the essential truth which is expressed by the word Regeneration. That term, like all the terms which are gathered together in the last chapter, is meant to express the Divine agency in the matter, and the Holy Spirit of God has "diversities of operations."

We may illustrate some of the points that have been made in this chapter by referring to the most famous Conversion in Christian history, that of the Apostle St. Paul. His case aptly brings out the two-sidedness of the experience. It was most

emphatically a Divine intervention which changed the persecutor into the Apostle. St. Paul was absolutely certain that he had been arrested in mid-career by the Risen Christ. "Paul, an apostle (not of men, neither by men, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, Who raised Him from the dead)," so he begins his Epistle to the Galatians. "When it pleased God, Who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me," so he writes in the fifteenth verse of the same chapter. "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks," so runs St. Luke's historical account in Acts ix. 5. These passages justify the statement that the change in St. Paul was a New Birth of a very striking kind. The Spirit of the Risen Christ was at work in him with convincing power.

If we study Rom. vii., verses 15–25, however, we get what is most probably an account of the same crisis, but written from the human point of view and affording a revelation of the spiritual history of the period before the crisis on the Damascus road. It is the story of a soul seeking deliverance from the power of sin, struggling painfully to overcome the strength of wrong desire, and at last finding victory and peace by faith in Jesus Christ. "For what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. . . . Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me [that is, in my flesh], dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not. . . . O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Here is a truly human struggle, a stern conflict of will against desire, an effort to turn away from what was sinful and against the law of conscience; a struggle prolonged, it would seem, for some considerable time, even while outwardly the career of persecution was in full swing; an effort to turn away from sin crowned with success at last and suddenly by a turning to Christ and a surrender to Him in faith. The human and the Divine were firmly welded together in the experience of the great Apostle. They have been equally and similarly present in the experiences of many a disciple of Christ all down the centuries.

V

NEWNESS OF LIFE

ATTENTION has been fixed in the preceding chapters upon the act or process of change from an un-Christian to a Christian life to which the description of "New Birth" is applied. In speaking of this change it has naturally been impossible to avoid suggesting a good deal about the new life to which the New Birth leads. But there are some thoughts more directly concerning the nature of the new life which may conveniently be gathered together in a separate chapter.

It is worth while to emphasize the fact that the regenerate life is, in a full sense of the word, a new life, different in kind from the unregenerate life. It is striking to notice how the thought of newness is insisted upon by Jesus Christ. It is implied in the Parables of the Cloth and the Wine Bottles in St. Mark ii. 21, 22: "No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles." In other words, the whole spirit of the Gospel is new, and the forms through which it finds expression must be new also. The same fact is suggested in the references to St. John the Baptist. "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it" (St. Luke xvi. 16). "Among those that are born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the Kingdom of God is greater than he" (St. Luke vii. 28).

This newness of the Gospel as contrasted with the old Jewish dispensation is not disproved but only defined in nature by such a saying, expressive of the spiritual continuity of the two dispensations, as "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (St. Matt.

v. 17). The Old Testament was fulfilled and its highest expectations and ideals were realized in the rise of an order which was new. For proof we have but to refer to Jeremiah's great prophecy (xxxi. 31): "The days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah," and to our Lord's reference to it at the close of His life: "This cup is the new testament [R.V. covenant] in my blood, which is shed for you."

When we pass on from the Master to the disciples, we remember the phrase of St. Paul, "a new creature." "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away: behold all things are become new" (2 Cor. v. 16, 17). "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God" (Gal. vi. 15, 16). We remember also the echoes of the Master's teaching in St. John's passage about the new commandment to love one another. There are also pictorial expressions of the great truth in the visions of the Revelation, where we have the new name written on the stone (ii. 17), the new song (v. 9), the new Jerusalem and the new heaven and earth (xxi. 1, 2), all crowned by the sweeping final promise in xxi. 5: "Behold, I make all things new."

This newness is much less noticeable in the case of those happy people whose lot it has been to be brought up in a good Christian home and to be sheltered from the world's worst temptations. Their growth in the Christian life has been as natural and as steady as their growth in all other directions; and yet even for them in some degree there is a real newness, seen perhaps most clearly at some crisis in their lives. Those who have had the privilege of close personal dealing with Confirmation candidates in the adolescent stage of their development know full well how new a thing the Christian religion often seems to them, even though they have been brought up in it all their lives. But the newness is unmistakable in the case of those who have been rescued from lives of sin and misery and brought to Christ in mature life. The full contrast between the Christian and the un-Christian life is seen best when the Christian flower grows amid the uncongenial surroundings of heathen darkness and degradation, or even in those dark spots which spoil a country nominally Christian.

Wherein, then, does this newness consist? To answer that question adequately would be to write a book upon Christian life and character, and would, therefore, be aside from the present purpose. It must suffice to venture upon a modern definition, and to give some illustrative quotations from the First Epistle of St. John. Regeneration, it has been said,[1] is "that work of the Holy Spirit in a man by which a new life of holy love, like the life of God, is initiated." Likeness to God in His two great leading characteristics of holiness and love is the distinguishing mark of the regenerate man.

Almost the whole of St. John's First Epistle is a commentary upon that statement.[2] "If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him." "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." "Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God: neither he that loveth not his brother: for this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another." "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God: for God is love."

Righteousness and love are two characteristics of the regenerate man which affect his relations to his fellow men. But St. John does not forget his relations to God, and we find that he also emphasizes the connection between the New Birth and faith. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth Him that begat loveth Him also [*i. e.* Jesus Christ] that is begotten of Him." "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" The foregoing quotations are given in the order in which they come in the Epistle. The Apostle rises from righteousness to love, and from love to its source in faith. He bids us notice, too, that the qualities of the new life are very closely related. "This is His commandment, that we should believe on the Name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another," he writes in iii. 23; and in v. 18, just before he closes his letter, he turns

[1] See Hastings' *D.B.* IV. 221*a*.

[2] The quotations are in ii. 29; iii. 2, 3, 10, 11, 14; iv. 7, 8; v. 1, 4, 5.

back again to the important matter of practical holiness, and ascribes it to that energy of Christ which can only manifest itself in the faithful heart: "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not: but He that is begotten of God keepeth him so R.V.], and that wicked one toucheth him not."

Where there is life, there must be growth. This is a law of the spiritual world no less than of the natural. A man who has passed from death unto life ought to be constantly gaining more life and fuller life. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." So said the Lord Jesus in His parable of the Good Shepherd (St. John x. 10). It was only a variation of metaphor when He said in the Parable of the Vine: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit" (St. John xv. 1, 2). A Christian man ought to be constantly increasing his fruit of faith and love and holiness. His life should be a richer thing at the end than it was at the beginning. It should be possible from time to time to mark the difference and measure the growth. A tree grows so slowly that, as you watch it, you can see no change. But if you come back to look after an interval, you can see the change distinctly. Similarly the soul of man grows slowly, but it should be always growing nevertheless.

It is this thought, among others, that lies behind such verses as Rom. vi. 3, 4, 10, 11, 12. St Paul there says that a Christian man at his Baptism died with Christ and rose again with Him. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death." But he goes on to say that the death and resurrection which then took place in principle and intention must be accomplished afterwards in literal fact, even though by slow stages. "In that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body." The "reckoning" of ourselves to be dead unto sin is a process, a struggle which extends over the years.

There is the same thought in Col. iii. 1–5: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and

your life is hid with Christ in God. . . . Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth." Christians are dead to sin in principle, but the actual process of dying has still to take place. The resolution to kill all the old vices may be made suddenly: the actual putting of them to death takes time. It is a process which is always incomplete, but it should always be going on its way towards completion.

All this means incidentally that it is not easy to draw a rigid line between Regeneration and the regenerate life. They shade off into one another. Sometimes, as we have seen, Regeneration is a sharp and decided action at a perfectly definite time. In this case it marks a clear beginning of the new life and can be quite easily distinguished from it. In other cases Regeneration is more like a gradual process. This is specially so with persons who have been brought up in a strong Christian atmosphere. It is almost impossible here to say where Regeneration ends and the regenerate life begins. Happily there is no need to try to draw the dividing line. If the person is seen to be bringing forth at least in some measure the fruits of holiness and love and faith, we can say with confidence that he is regenerate. The ultimate test of Regeneration is its fruits. It is the lesson of the wind which Jesus gave to Nicodemus: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit." The wind is known by its moan. The Spirit-born man is known by his life.

VI

THE RITE OF BAPTISM

We saw in the first chapter that the Service for Holy Baptism in the Prayer Book brings before us two main topics, the ceremony of Baptism and the inward change known as Regeneration. The last four chapters have been taken up with an attempt to set out the teaching of the Bible upon the many-sided subject of Regeneration. We appealed to the Bible because the Reformers who drew up the Prayer Book Service were men who rested all their beliefs upon the foundation of Bible teaching, and therefore a thorough grasp of the doctrine of Holy Scripture is the best equipment for any one who hopes truly to interpret the language of the Prayer Book. Our next step is to review the evidence of the Bible upon the rite of Baptism in itself; after that we must ask what is the relationship suggested in the same Authority between Regeneration and Baptism. The examination of these two points will take up this chapter and the next.

Baptism is first mentioned in the New Testament in the accounts given of the work of St. John the Baptist. We are told in St. Matthew iii. 1–6 that "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judæa, and saying, Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. . . . Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." Among those who came to John was Jesus, and the story relates that Jesus persuaded John to baptize Him—of course without any preceding confession of sin—in spite of his natural reluctance. A little later, in the passages covering the period when Jesus Christ began His active ministry, and the pre-eminence of St. John gradually lessened until at length his imprisonment by Herod caused him to disappear altogether from public life, we come across references to a Baptism apparently very similar to that of St. John, administered under the authority of Jesus by His disciples: "After these things came

Jesus and His disciples into the land of Judæa; and there He tarried with them and baptized. . . . When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (though Jesus Himself baptized not, but His disciples) He left Judæa, and departed again into Galilee" (St. John iii. 22; iv. 1–3). Some very interesting questions can be raised about the character of this early Baptism by St. John and Jesus, and also about the probable prevalence among the Jews of that day of a form of Baptism used when Gentile proselytes were formally admitted to the Jewish Church. For our present purpose, however, there is no need to discuss these rites: for while they are undoubtedly interesting anticipations of Christian Baptism, they are in no sense identical with it. Christian Baptism dates from the last command of Christ as recorded in St. Matthew xxviii. 19, 20: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." There is no parallel to this passage in any of the other Gospels, but that is no sufficient reason for doubting its genuineness. Unless, indeed, Jesus had explicitly commanded the rite of Baptism, it is hardly likely that it would have been so uniformly adopted from the very first as the practice of the Church. Meanwhile we note here Biblical justification for the two statements in the Prayer Book that Baptism is a Sacrament, and that a Sacrament is to be defined, among other things, as a rite ordained by Christ Himself.

The element in which Baptism was intended by our Lord to take place is not expressly mentioned in the words of institution, but no possible doubt can be entertained, in the light of existing practice, that it was to be water. The only question which can be raised here concerns the manner in which the water was to be applied to the person baptized. The Baptisms administered in the early days by St. John and by the disciples of Jesus took place in the river Jordan. Much water was wanted; for in St. John iii. 23 we read of St. John the Baptist that he "was baptizing in Ænon near to Salim, because there was much water there." This certainly suggests that the Baptisms were by immersion, the person baptized being altogether plunged beneath the surface of the water. If so, the procedure would have been quite in agreement with the Jewish law concerning proselytes, which ran: "As soon as he grows whole of the wound of circumcision, they bring him to Baptism, and being placed in the water, they again instruct him in some weightier and some lighter commands of the Law.

Which being heard, he plunges himself and comes up, and behold, he is an Israelite in all things."

It is reasonable to suppose that the Christian Church adopted the same custom. Such is certainly the natural inference from Rom. vi. 4 and Col. ii. 12, where the ceremonial of Baptism is used as an illustration of the nature of Regeneration: "We are buried with Him by Baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life." "Buried with Him in Baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through faith in the working of God [R.V.] Who hath raised Him from the dead." It does not follow, however, that immersion was an invariable custom, or that it was regarded as necessary in all cases to the proper performance of the rite. Indeed there seem to be some instances in the New Testament where there could only have been the pouring of water upon the body. It is doubtful, for example, whether the three thousand who were baptized on the Day of Pentecost could have been immersed, partly because of the lack of sufficient water in the vicinity of the Temple, and partly because they would be a mixed multitude of men and women. Similarly it is not likely that provision for immersion was available in the prison at Philippi when the gaoler and his family were baptized. Nor was such Baptism by affusion, as it is called, without a symbolic character of its own; for if immersion was a pictorial representation of death and resurrection, so was affusion of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost.

We may notice in passing that in the light of this conflicting evidence in the New Testament there is ample justification for the alternative usage allowed to the priest in the rubric of the Prayer Book: "Then naming it [the child] after them [the God-parents] he shall dip it in the water discreetly and warily. . . . But if they certify that the child is weak, it shall suffice to pour water upon it." As a matter of fact the usage has varied throughout the Church all down the centuries. Where climatic conditions and the age of the persons baptized are similar to those prevailing in New Testament days, as is the case, for example, when adult converts from heathenism are made in warm countries, such as India and Africa, Baptism by immersion is still the common custom. When conditions are dissimilar, as with Infant Baptism in a cold climate, it has usually been the custom to pour or sprinkle water upon the head. We are warranted in saying that the quantity of water used and the area of the body affected are immaterial.

A more important problem, over which an enormous amount of discussion has taken place, is as to the proper form of words to be used when the water is applied. The Prayer Book Service, in harmony with the almost universal tradition of the Church, directs that Baptism shall be in the Name of the Trinity. The priest is to say: "*N*, or *M*, I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." This carries out exactly the command given by Christ in the Words of Institution, in St. Matthew xxviii. 19, except that the Greek would be more literally translated "into" than "in" the Name. The meaning of the formula seems to be "into relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, being such as They are revealed to be through the life of Christ and the preparatory teaching of the Old Testament." The curious thing is, however, that in hardly any case in the New Testament where the formula of Baptism is recorded, does it coincide with the Words of Institution. Some instances of this must be given.

In Acts ii. 38 we have, "Be baptized every one of you in [or on] the Name of Jesus Christ." The Samaritans (Acts viii. 16) were baptized "in the Name of the Lord Jesus"; Peter commanded Cornelius to be baptized "in the Name of Jesus Christ" (Acts x. 48, R.V.; the A.V. reads "in the Name of the Lord"). The twelve converts of Ephesus, whose story is told in Acts xix. 1–7, were baptized "in the Name of the Lord Jesus." When we pass from the Acts to the Epistles the same peculiarity meets us. In Rom. vi. 3 baptism is "into Jesus Christ," in Gal. iii. 27 "into Christ," in 1 Cor. vi. 11 [an almost certain allusion] "in the Name of the Lord Jesus."

What is the correct explanation of this apparent disobedience to Christ's command on the part of the Apostles? Very many suggestions have been made, but the most probable explanation is this. There are a few other phrases parallel to the phrase "in the Name of Christ." Thus, in 1 Cor. x. 2 the Israelites are said to have been baptized "unto Moses." In 1 Cor. i. 13 the Corinthians are asked whether they were baptized "in the name of Paul." Now there is no suggestion in either of these passages that "unto Moses" or "in the name of Paul" was the actual phrase used at the Baptism. What is meant is that the Baptism of the Israelites was into relationship with Moses as leader, and involved submission to his authority. Similarly when the converts of the Apostles were baptized, they became publicly and professedly Christians, under vow of obedience to Christ. This fact could be most shortly expressed by the use of some such phrase

as that they were baptized "into the Name of Christ." It is not implied that this was the formula used at the Baptism. Indeed the very variety of the phrases which have been quoted goes against such a supposition. They are but short descriptions of the result of the ceremony. The words actually used in the vast majority of cases were probably the full formula "in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"; and even if in some exceptional cases this was not so, we may fairly claim that the Trinitarian formula was at any rate always implicit.

It is interesting to notice that the same apparent inconsistency as to the formula of Baptism is found occasionally in Christian documents of the first three or four centuries. Thus Pope Stephen of Rome, having before his mind certain bodies of Christians outside the Church whom he was anxious to get within it, proclaimed himself willing to accept as valid any Baptisms which had been administered "in the Name of Jesus Christ, whensoever and howsoever" they were administered. It would even seem, from an account of Christian ceremonies probably written by Hippolytus of Rome early in the third century, of which more will be said in Chapter VIII., that at Rome at that time no Baptismal formula was used at all, but the person being baptized stood in the Font and recited his belief in the Three Persons of the Trinity, while the officiating minister silently poured water upon him three times, once at the recitation of each Name. But in both these cases a Trinitarian formula was implied; and all evidence goes to show that in the vast majority of cases in early times, and universally in later centuries, the Trinitarian formula was actually used.

There is not much clear evidence about the ecclesiastical position of the persons by whom Baptism was administered. The Apostles may or may not have personally baptized the three thousand on the Day of Pentecost. Philip the deacon baptized the Ethiopian eunuch and presumably his converts in Samaria. Cornelius and his company were apparently baptized under Peter's authority by the brethren who had gone with him from Joppa and who were presumably laymen. Similarly it is most likely that the Ananias who baptized St. Paul was neither a presbyter nor a deacon. Lay Baptism was certainly common in New Testament days, and it cannot now be regarded as invalid, even though in these days of established and organized Christianity the right to baptize is normally confined to the ordained ministry.

It is equally impossible to be very definite about the age of the persons admitted to Baptism. There can be no doubt that

in the early days the large majority of those baptized were adults. This was in the nature of things inevitable. The Lord's command was to go and make disciples of all nations, and then to baptize them. This implies that the Apostles were to get into touch with people who could understand a message and respond to it, who could appreciate the wonder of the Christian Gospel and frame their thoughts and beliefs and conduct in accordance with its requirements. So we find the Apostles asserting the necessity of faith and repentance as a preliminary to Baptism. Peter said unto them on the Day of Pentecost: "Repent ye and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ." All this assumes that the baptized were persons who had come to years of discretion.

Is there any evidence that infants were baptized in New Testament times? It must be frankly admitted that of direct and certain evidence there is none. We can only point to some possible cases. There are references to Baptism of households. "A certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there" (Acts xvi. 14, 15). "They spake unto him [the gaoler at Philippi] the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway" (Acts xvi. 32, 33). Similarly in 1 Cor. i. 16 St. Paul says "I baptized also the household of Stephanas." Did these households include children? Obviously no definite answer can be given. It can be argued with much plausibility that Lydia was an unmarried business woman and that her household means her assistants, who would therefore be grown up. On the other hand it is perhaps more likely than not that the gaoler at Philippi and Stephanas had children. There are also two references to children in St. Paul's letters, Eph. vi. 1 and Col. iii. 20. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord." "Children, obey your parents in all things." We cannot be sure that these children had been baptized, but the fact that St. Paul sends them a message seems to imply that they were recognized members of the Churches at Ephesus and Colossæ, and this most probably presupposes their Baptism.

We have to fall back upon an inference from the fitness of things. As soon as there began to be children of Christian

parents, the question would arise whether they were to be baptized. What would the general customs of the time prescribe as the natural line of conduct in the circumstances? Many of the early Christian families would be of Jewish descent. To them the Jewish custom of circumcising boys of eight days old would inevitably suggest the naturalness of baptizing Christian children, and it would not be difficult to perceive that the requirements of faith and repentance could be temporarily satisfied by the guarantee of parents or other responsible persons that their children should be brought up as little Christians. On the other hand, Christians of Gentile descent would easily argue that since it was a recognized principle that the father was head of the household and had absolute control of everybody within it, it followed that if he became a Christian and accepted Baptism, all his household should do so too. Jew and Gentile alike would feel the force of Christ's invitation: "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." Both would call to mind His saying about the fitness of children for His Kingdom: "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven" (St. Mark x. 14; St. Matt. xviii. 3).

On the whole we may probably sum up the position fairly in this way. The earliest Christians must necessarily have been adults who were able to enter with full understanding into the responsibilities of Christian life. But when these Christians of the first generation became heads of families, current customs and modes of thought would suggest that their children should be baptized even though they were unable at the moment to understand what was done to them. When we pass beyond the New Testament into early Christian history we find Infant Baptism so well established that it is difficult to suppose that it was not practised in New Testament days.

NOTE

EARLY CHRISTIAN REFERENCES TO INFANT BAPTISM

1. JUSTIN MARTYR, about 150 A.D., writes that there were many "who from childhood had been disciples of Christ." In the light of St. Matt. xxviii. 19 this probably means that they had been baptized.

2. Irenæus, who was familiar with the Asiatic and Gallic Churches, and who was a disciple of Polycarp, who had known St. John, writes about 175 A.D: "He came to save all by Himself; all, I say, who through Him are born again unto God, infants, and little children, and boys and young men, and those who are older." In other passages of his book Irenæus commonly associates new Birth and Baptism.

3. Tertullian of Carthage, about 200 A.D., wrote deprecating Infant Baptism because of his exaggerated views that sin after Baptism could not be forgiven. But his very objections show that Infant Baptism was the common practice. "So it is most useful, according to each one's condition and disposition and age, to defer Baptism: this is especially the case with regard to children. . . . Let them therefore come when they are growing up, let them come when they are learning, when they are being taught to what they are to come: let them become Christians when they have become able to know Christ. Why do they of innocent age hurry to the forgiveness of sins?"

4. Clement of Alexandria, head of the Catechetical School there from 190–203 A.D., refers to "children drawn up out of the water." This is meaningless, unless it refers to Baptism.

5. The Canons of Hippolytus, early in the third century, refer to "those who make the responses for infants."

6. A certain Fidus at Carthage taught that it would be well to baptize children at the same age as Jewish boys were circumcised. A Council was held to discuss the matter in 253 A.D., and it was decided that children should be baptized when they were two or three days old, this being evidently the traditional practice. St. Augustine wrote afterwards that "Cyprian did not lay down any new decree [*i.e.* when he issued the decision of this Council], but preserved the most sure faith of the Church, for the correction of those who thought that a little child ought not to be baptized until the eighth day after birth."

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7. In the catacomb of St. Calixtus at Rome there is a painting which is said to date from about 200 A.D., which represents a child being baptized.

These incidental allusions, from the scanty literature of the first two centuries of the expansion of Christianity, clearly show that Infant Baptism was the established Church custom, and they make certain what could otherwise be only a probability, that it was recognized and adopted in the days of the Apostles.

VII

THE GIFT AND THE SEAL

We have now studied Regeneration, the spiritual act or process, and Baptism, its outward and visible sign, each in isolation from the other. But as a matter of fact the two things are not isolated, and we shall see that the New Testament establishes the very closest connection between them. The purpose of the present chapter is to examine this connection and get a clear idea of its nature and conditions.

First of all let us notice the cases of Baptism which are recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. We shall thus see what the practice of the Church was; and from an examination of its practice we shall be able to discover its underlying beliefs. It will be best to begin by compiling a list of the cases in the order of the text of St. Luke. (1) Acts ii. 40, 41: "With many other words did he [Peter] testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." (2) Acts viii. 12, 13: "But when they [the Samaritans] believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the Name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."[1] (3) Acts viii. 36–38: "The eunuch said, See, here is water: What doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said,[2] If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch: and he baptized him." (4) Acts ix. 6, 17, 18: "He, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? . . . Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto

[1] The story of Simon Magus is reserved for later treatment in this chapter.

[2] The question of text involved in this verse is referred to later in this chapter.

thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized." (5) Acts x. 47, 48: "Can any man forbid water, that these [Cornelius and his company] should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord." (6) Acts xvi. 14, 15: "A certain woman named Lydia . . . which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there." (7) Acts xvi. 30–34: [The Philippian gaoler] "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes: and was baptized, he and all his, straightway . . . he rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." (8) Acts xviii. 8: "Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house: and many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized. (9) Acts xix. 4–6: [The story of Paul's discovery of the twelve disciples of John the Baptist at Ephesus]: "Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied."

What, now, is the theory of the relationship between Regeneration and Baptism which these instances reveal? With the aid of certain other passages, chiefly in the New Testament Epistles, we may make the following deductions. In making them we must remember that with the possible exception of some children who may have been present in the households of Lydia the purple merchant and the gaoler at Philippi, all the persons baptized were adults; therefore whatever was done was intelligible to them, and they could and did take an active share in the rite considered as a whole. The modification of theory required by the Baptism of Infants will be discussed in due course.

(1) The administration of Baptism to adults was the natural

consequence of a spiritual change which had previously taken place in them. In most of the instances cited this change consisted in the hearing and accepting the message of the Gospel as it was proclaimed by Christian missionaries. The fact of acceptance is described in varying terms, but it is uniformly stated to have occurred. Thus the crowd on the Day of Pentecost "gladly received" the word. The Samaritans "believed" Philip. The Ethiopian eunuch believed with all his heart[1] that Jesus was the Son of God. Saul must have been made familiar with the substance of the Apostolic preaching by his persecution of the Christians, and his acceptance of it on the Damascus road is implied in that surrender to the Person of Christ which found expression in the words, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Lydia "attended." Crispus "believed." The Philippian gaoler said nothing, if we may judge by the silence of the record, but his actions spoke as clearly as words could have done.

In short, all these persons showed the two qualities of repentance and faith of which we have spoken in a previous chapter. But in that chapter we argued that repentance and faith constitute the human side of that spiritual event which, when regarded from the Divine side as the mysterious result of the activity of the Spirit of God, is known as Regeneration. We may therefore equally well say that, in the instances at present reviewed, Regeneration was the condition regarded as a necessary preliminary to Baptism. A study of the next case, that of Cornelius, will serve to confirm this conclusion, though it is interesting to notice that in it the spiritual event is regarded from the Divine side.

The story of Cornelius is a particularly important one. "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the words. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God." Whether the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Cornelius and his company was attended by any such outward manifestations as the wind and the tongues of fire which signalized His descent upon the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost there is no evidence to show. But no

[1] It is true that this statement is omitted in our best manuscripts of the New Testament, and therefore in the text of the Revised Version; but there can hardly be a doubt that the Authorized Version in inserting it is following a very early tradition. In any case the variation in the manuscripts, which gives rise to the difference between our two Versions, does not have any weight against our general argument.

Christian of the early days who saw a repetition of the result which had followed His coming upon the Day of Pentecost, namely, the speaking with tongues in praise of God, could doubt for a moment that the cause had also been repeated, and that Cornelius was indeed filled with the Holy Ghost. To us in modern days it might be still more convincing to argue that Cornelius by his life of prayer and almsgiving, of the fear of God and the love of man, showed the signs of the Holy Spirit's regenerating work even before Peter preached to him.

The case of the twelve men at Ephesus is slightly different. It will be remembered that these had been baptized "unto John's Baptism"; that is to say, they had promised to give up sin and to look forward to the coming of the Messiah. St. Paul then preached to them the good tidings that the Messiah had come in the Person of Jesus Christ. This message they "heard," and, it is implied, they believed. Consequently they were baptized. But it is definitely said that the Holy Ghost came upon them afterwards, and in connection not with their Baptism, but with the laying on of St. Paul's hands. Now the question at once arises whether this case constitutes an exception to the rule which our other cases seem to have established, namely that Baptism follows upon that spiritual event which may from one side be described as Regeneration by the Holy Ghost, and from the other as the dawn of faith in the soul. Before we regard the case as an exception to a rule which has such a large amount of support behind it, we ought carefully to inquire whether any other explanation is possible. It will help us over our difficulty if we remember what is said about our Lord Jesus Christ. St. Luke records the message of the Angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary that "the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." This surely implies that the Infant Jesus was full of the Holy Ghost from His birth.[1] But St. Luke also records that when Jesus was about thirty years of age, He was baptized; and at His Baptism in answer to His prayer, "the heaven was opened and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him." It would seem that Christ received the Holy Spirit twice, or, to put it more accurately, that the Holy Spirit came afresh at the Baptism to One with Whom He was already present. We are driven by such a case as this to make a distinction between the

[1] Gabriel's prediction about St. John the Baptist, recorded in St. Luke i. 15, forms an interesting parallel.

Holy Spirit's Person and His gifts or manifestation. He was dwelling in Christ from childhood upwards, manifesting His Presence by gifts which enabled Jesus to live His perfect child-life of obedience in the home at Nazareth. But at the Baptism, when the outward ministry was to begin and Jesus was to be faced by enormously increased demands, the Holy Spirit endowed Him with new gifts and graces commensurate with the new needs. Now we can either say that the Holy Spirit, personally present throughout, bestowed new gifts, or we can say that the Holy Spirit came afresh. It is the latter language which is used in the case of Christ. But the meaning in either case is the same.

This line of interpretation will provide us with a solution of the puzzle about the twelve men at Ephesus. It will also account for another famous incident which is found in Acts viii. In that chapter we have the story how Philip the deacon went down to a city of Samaria and preached Christ unto its people. The power of his preaching and the wonderfulness of his miracles of healing convinced them of the truth of his message; they received it and were filled with joy, and thereupon "they were baptized, both men and women." Some time afterwards the apostolic body at Jerusalem heard what Philip had done. Their action may best be stated in the words of the Bible: "They sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (for as yet He was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." If this passage and the one in chap. xix about the twelve men stood alone, we should certainly conclude from them that the Holy Spirit was not given at Baptism, but only at the ceremony which later on came to be called Confirmation. But in the light of our Lord's personal history, and in deference to the weight of the evidence showing the normal activity of the Spirit before Baptism, we are driven by consistency to interpret the phrases used in the stories of the Samaritans and the Ephesians to mean that the Holy Spirit was indeed present in the hearts of these people in regenerating power before their Baptism, but that there were certain other spiritual gifts which were bestowed upon them in answer to further prayer at the time of the laying on of apostolic hands. The regeneration of the Ephesian men before Baptism may even be considered as implied in the fact that they "heard" Paul.

If this explanation be correct, there is uniform evidence

throughout the cases which have been quoted to show that Baptism was an outward rite administered by the Church to those in whose hearts the Holy Spirit had already done His regenerating work.

(2) We go on to ask why Baptism was thus administered. Of course a first answer is that it was administered in obedience to the command of Christ. But this answer does not quite satisfy us. We want to know also what part Baptism played in relation to Regeneration; in what way Baptism was understood to be helpful to a regenerated man. We are justified in asking such a question because we can be quite sure that Jesus Christ would not have instituted the rite of Baptism and ordained its general observance by His followers unless He had conceived that it would be in some way spiritually profitable. We shall not find our answer in the Book of Acts. We shall have to look for it in that part of the New Testament where Christian theology has its beginning, namely in the apostolic letters. As a preliminary we notice what St. Paul says about circumcision in Rom. iv. 10: "How was it [righteousness] then reckoned? when he [Abraham] was in circumcision or uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised." Now one of the common uses of a seal is for authentication. It is affixed to a document as a solemn pledge of its truth and validity. So God made to Abraham a promise that his faith should be reckoned to him for righteousness, and circumcision in the flesh was instituted as the outward mark whereby he might be aided constantly to believe the truth of God's promise. Now there was such an obvious parallel between circumcision under the Jewish dispensation and Baptism under the Christian, that it was natural for Christians to transfer to the latter an idea connected with the former, and to regard Baptism as a seal of all that spiritual change in themselves which we have spoken of under the metaphors of Regeneration, Adoption, and Forgiveness. Baptism certainly was so regarded in the second century, as early Christian writings witness. Therefore, though it is impossible to feel quite certain about the matter, we may consider it very probable that in some New Testament passages where sealing is referred to there is an implied reference to Baptism.

The passages are these: 2 Cor. i. 20–22: "For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God by us. Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and

hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." Here no doubt the main proof of the truth of God's promises is the realized presence in the heart of the "anointing," that is of the Holy Spirit as the firstfruits of other blessings. But the "sealing" may refer to Baptism, in which case the outward and inward proofs are put side by side. Next come two passages in the Epistle to the Ephesians. In i. 13 we read: "In Whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in Whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." In iv. 30 we read: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." In both these verses again the presence of the Spirit is the seal explicitly mentioned, but we cannot forget the very close chronological connection between the Spirit's regenerating presence and the ceremony of Baptism. There is a further verse in Rev. ix. 4 where the reference to Baptism may in one way seem clearer, though on the other hand it would be unwise to lay much stress on what is plainly a pictorial passage: "It was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree: but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads." It does not really very much matter for our purpose whether Baptism is definitely alluded to in these passages or not. The thought of it as a seal was at any rate natural from the first, and was bound very soon to find verbal expression. It seemed necessary, however, to refer to the idea at this point, because it becomes of such enormous importance later on.

(3) The close connection in time between Regeneration and Baptism leads to a certain mode of speech which it is vital to remember. It will be best first to set out the passages where the usage occurs. Acts i. 5: "John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Rom. vi. 3, 4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Col. ii. 12: "Buried with Him in Baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God [R.V. through faith in the working of God]." 1 Cor. vi. 11: "Such [sinners] were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

Eph. v. 25, 26: "Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." Titus iii. 5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

What has happened is clear. Let us suppose that a Christian of ten years' standing looks back to the beginning of his Christian life. He remembers the day when he first heard the proclamation of the Gospel from the lips of some apostle or evangelist. He remembers the tremendous difference between the truth which was then put before him and the things which he had previously been taught to believe, the vast gulf which yawned between the sins of his old heathen life and the new life of goodness which opened out before him as a glorious possibility. He remembers how he opened his mind and heart to the new teaching, and felt within himself the joy of forgiveness and the quickening powers of the Holy Spirit. He remembers how he immediately threw in his lot with the little Christian society and testified in Baptism to the faith which was in him. Ten years before these events had been a series, spread possibly over some weeks. After ten years' interval they stand out as one luminous event in his life. The consequence is that the series of events is spoken of as a unity: words or phrases which, strictly speaking, are applicable to one event only in the series are applied also to others, or even to the whole, without any sense of incongruity.

Thus the Apostles can speak of burial "by Baptism into death," of cleansing "with the washing of water by the word," or of the "washing of Regeneration." There is no harm in language of this sort so long as it is understood; so long as it is borne in mind upon reflection that Regeneration is one thing and Baptism is another; that Regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit and is primary and essential, while Baptism is administered by the Church and, though useful in its place as sign and seal, is only secondary. But in those days, as in every age since, there was a danger lurking in the use of such phrases. Magic was rife all round the early Christians. Spiritual powers were supposed to be attached to material things, outward rites and spoken formulæ to be followed by spiritual results. Thus the new Christian disciple, with the influence of heathenism strong upon him, with heathen ways of thought firmly rooted in his mind, was always in danger of attaching to Baptism in itself a power for Salvation which really belonged to the Holy Spirit alone. That this danger was

no imaginary one is shown clearly in one very significant passage in Saint Peter's Epistle. The context consists of a rather obscure reference to a preaching of Christ to spirits in prison. But this does not affect the words important for our present purpose, which are, "Eight souls were saved through water, which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even Baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. iii. 21. R.V.). The word translated "interrogation" is difficult to interpret, but whatever it may precisely mean, the broad fact is clear that Saint Peter states (and thought it necessary to state), that when he says that Baptism saves men, what he refers to is not the outward and physical ceremony but the spiritual change which is associated with and sealed by that ceremony. This is a truth the light of which has been sadly blurred in later ages, but we shall find that it illuminates much otherwise doubtful language in our Prayer Book.

(4) Hitherto we have argued upon two assumptions, one that baptized people were adults who were capable of Regeneration before their Baptism, the other that those who professed faith [in other words, who were regenerate] were genuine in that profession. We have finally to consider what consequence follows when one or other of these assumptions falls to the ground. There is an instance of the failure of the second assumption in Acts viii. which was purposely omitted from the list at the beginning of the chapter. It is the case of Simon Magus. "Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. . . . And when Simon saw that through laying on of the Apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power. . . . But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; for thy heart is not right in the sight of God." There are two possible interpretations of this passage. One is, that Simon really believed Philip's message and became a sincere Christian, but fell away through avarice when Peter arrived. This does not seem reasonable if Peter's visit was at an early stage of Philip's work. We therefore adopt the other interpretation, which best suits the narrative, that what struck Simon was not Philip's message but his miracles, and that quite deliberately (unless to some extent he deceived himself) he pretended to believe Philip in order that, by swimming with the stream, he might retain some

hold upon his former followers. Simon then received the seal of Regeneration without being first regenerate, and became the first member of a class of persons sadly too well known in later centuries who earned for themselves the name of "ficti," or pretenders. It is of importance to notice how Peter dealt with the case. He said to Simon, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter. . . . Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee, for I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." Contrast this with Peter's advice to the multitudes on the Day of Pentecost. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you." Those who stood outside the Church were to undergo the spiritual change, and were also to witness to that change in Baptism. Simon had already witnessed to that change, though untruthfully; he had already been admitted to the Christian society; he could not be re-admitted. What he had to do was to make his profession genuine, to allow the Holy Spirit to do His regenerating work in his heart. In treating Simon in this way, Peter was simply acting upon the conception of Baptism as a seal. A promise sealed may be upon conditions which for a time are unfulfilled. So long as they remain so, the seal can only be a guarantee that the promise will be fulfilled when the conditions are satisfied. Baptism is a guarantee that the Holy Spirit will do His regenerating work as soon as the co-operation of the man's repentance and faith make it possible.

(5) What is the result when the other assumption fails, and the persons baptized are infants and therefore incapable of Regeneration in any recognizable form? The case cannot be definitely illustrated from the New Testament, but we have already noticed the possible presence of children in the households of Lydia, the gaoler, Crispus, and Stephanas; and there is plenty of evidence to show that children of Christian parents were commonly baptized before many decades were past. It may come as a surprise to some readers to see the statement that infants are incapable of Regeneration. Misunderstanding may perhaps be prevented if it is recalled to mind that the word Regeneration is being used to convey that full meaning with which it is invested in the writings of the New Testament. There a regenerate man is one in whom the Holy Spirit has begotten spiritual life, who, from the human point of view, has been able to turn definitely and consciously towards God. It needs no reflection to perceive that unconscious infants are unable to be regenerate in the sense defined. A large part of the confusion which has surrounded this whole subject in

modern times is due on the one hand to the fact that writers are not always consistent or clear about the meanings which they assign to words, and on the other hand to the fact that Regeneration has been frequently used in the course of history with a much diminished meaning.

What, then, is the condition of an infant who has been baptized? His case is really very simple. He is in a position very similar to that of the pretender whose case was discussed in the last section, though from another cause. He is a member of the Christian society, and his Baptism can never be repeated. He has received the seal of Regeneration, the assurance of God's gifts and promises, which are ready to be bestowed upon him as soon as he is capable of receiving them. The Holy Spirit broods over him from his earliest days, and begins to do His quickening work.[1] That work is supported from the human side at the earliest opportunity by the activity of Christian parents and teachers. It is quite impossible to say how soon an infant begins to learn. Probably within a few days of his birth he is silently drinking in the influences of the atmosphere of the home, whether that atmosphere be one of love and purity or, as in some sad cases, altogether the reverse. At a very early stage the faculty of imitation develops, and the importance of the example of nurse or parents becomes paramount. In the sphere of religion, as in all other spheres, nature has provided that children shall learn a great deal without being conscious of the process. Finally, the child learns the meaning and use of language, and religious instruction and the practice of simple prayer are able to begin. Thus the Holy Spirit's work, and the work of the representatives of the Church go on together, the one invisible and the other manifest; and in due course the mystery becomes apparent, birth from above has taken place, the child is manifestly regenerate. It will not of course be supposed that he has reached the fulness of Christian knowledge or the perfection of Christian life and character. It has been freely admitted in a previous chapter that there must be growth in the spiritual realm, as in the physical and mental one.[2] But in all realms growth assumes the presence of life, and our main interest has been in th dawn of life.

[1] In view of this, an infant may of course be said to be capable of an inchoate and rudimentary regeneration.

[2] Indeed, in some instances at all ages, and in many instances during the period of adolescence, the growth is so rapid and the forms assumed by the life become so different, that it is not unusual to speak of a fresh Regeneration or Conversion.

The spiritual history of an infant in a Christian home is thus exactly opposite to that of a convert from Judaism or heathenism. The convert first becomes regenerate as a result of the preaching of the Gospel and the working of the Spirit, and is baptized subsequently: the infant is baptized first, and becomes regenerate at some later period of his life, or perhaps—in some sad cases—does not become regenerate at all. But in either case the spiritual reality must be distinguished in thought from the material seal; and Christian theologians have readily perceived that exceptional cases may arise where the seal may be unused without affecting the reality of that which in the normal case is sealed.

VIII

EASTER EVE AMONG THE EARLY CHRISTIANS

A GLANCE at an administration of Holy Baptism in the days of the Early Church will serve the double purpose of bridging the gulf between the first century and the period of the Reformation, and of showing how the theological ideas which we have seen to underlie the Baptism of the Bible were brought into the Primitive Church Services. It will be convenient to take for our main guide an account of Baptism which is contained in a book called the Egyptian Church Order. This book, according to the opinion of most scholars, dates at any rate in large part from the first quarter of the third century, and may be the work of a great Roman theologian called Hippolytus, who is said to have been at one time Bishop of Portus, near Rome. If so, it probably represents the contemporary usage of the Roman Church, and it may enshrine for us a long-standing tradition.

Baptism is in some ways markedly different from what it had been in the New Testament. There the persons baptized were mostly those who had had some training in Judaism, and who were living upright lives: accordingly, not much time was spent in preparing them for Baptism, and a good deal of necessary instruction was left till afterwards. The Roman service is chiefly intended for converts from a degenerate heathenism, and it comes at the end of a long period, during which the convert had been a catechumen.

The first step to be taken by any one who wanted to become a Christian was to seek enrolment as a Catechumen. This meant that he had to get into touch with some church officials appointed for the purpose. Inquiries were made as to his motives, and a very searching examination was conducted into his manner of life and his business. A large number of occupations were deemed inconsistent with any adherence to Christianity, and if he was engaged in one of these he had to give it up. He had also to find some Christians who were prepared to introduce

him to the Church, and to bear testimony to his character. If he succeeded in satisfying all the requirements, he was formally admitted as a Catechumen. Prayer was offered for him; hands were laid on his head, and he was "made a Christian."

Now began a period of definite instruction. This was given partly on Sundays, partly at other times. On Sundays the Catechumens were present at the back of the church during the first part of the Liturgy, or Holy Communion Service. They listened to the Lessons, and the Gospel, and the Sermon, and were then dismissed with a prayer. On other days special classes seem to have been held for them, conducted by catechists. The subject-matter of instruction was partly moral and partly doctrinal. In the early period of the catechumenate main stress was laid on moral instruction, so that no shame should be brought on the Church by doubtful conduct on the part of any who were nominally attached to it. The doctrinal teaching, so far as it was given, must of course have been substantially an exposition of the Apostles' Creed, with special reference to the varied philosophies and false faiths current in the neighbourhood. There was no fixed length of catechumenate, and, broadly speaking, each case seems to have been taken on its merits, Catechumens being recommended for Baptism when their instructors thought they were sufficiently far advanced. The only limitation was imposed by the practice common at that time of administering Baptism in normal cases only at Easter.

At some date before Easter—a little later on it was at the beginning of Lent—the selected Catechumens were put together for more immediate instruction for Baptism. They were now taught the Creed more definitely and fully. They were advised to discipline themselves by fasting and penitential acts. A further ceremony was suggested by the belief, so strongly and widely held at that time, in the prevalence and power of evil spirits. Each day hands were laid upon them, and solemn prayer was offered, that the evil spirits might depart from them. In technical language they were exorcised. Towards the end of the period, and quite probably on the Wednesday before Easter, the Catechumens were submitted to a final examination as to their fitness for Baptism, conducted not by their teachers, but by the bishop himself; and he it was who finally made up the list for Baptism.

The Baptism took place early on Easter morning. The Catechumens and the baptized Christians assembled in the church at nightfall on Easter Eve. The first part of the night until cockcrowing was spent in a long-drawn-out service consist-

ing of lessons and sermon with singing of hymns, a service of exactly the same type as that which formed the first section of the ordinary Sunday worship.

At cockcrowing the clergy and candidates for Baptism went into the baptistery. The ceremonial was very ornate, but only those important parts of it will here be mentioned which have a bearing upon the discussion we are undertaking. The first three parts taken together formed a summary of the results which had been achieved during the catechumenate. The candidate first renewed his renunciation of Satan and all his works. He was then anointed with oil of exorcism by a presbyter who bade all evil spirits depart from him. Thirdly, he descended into the font (which was usually in the shape of a tank, and sometimes had running water passing through it), and repeated to the presbyter or to the bishop a short summary of the Christian faith in which he had been instructed.

Thereupon followed the act of Baptism. The bishop or the presbyter, standing beside the font, laid his hand upon the head of the Catechumen and put to him three questions which practically covered the same ground as the three sections of our Apostles' Creed. To each question the Catechumen answered, "I believe," and after each answer he was baptized once, either by by being plunged beneath the water or by having water poured over his head. There does not seem to have been in this Roman service any use of the familiar formula of St. Matthew's Gospel: "I baptize thee In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." It will, however, be noticed that the repetition of the three parts of the Creed containing the Names of the three Persons of the Trinity amounted to practically the same thing. There is very little evidence to show what was done at this period in other branches of the Church, but the few relevant phrases which are found suggest that at least in North Africa and Egypt, and probably in Palestine the Trinitarian formula was used.

When all the Catechumens had been baptized the service was resumed in the church. The bishop laid his hand upon the head of each one with the prayer, "Lord God, Which hast accounted them worthy to receive remission of sins by the Bath of Regeneration of the Holy Ghost, send upon them Thy grace that they may serve Thee according to Thy Will: for to Thee, the Father and the Son with the Holy Ghost, belongs the glory in the Holy Church both now and world without end. Amen." He also poured consecrated oil upon the head of each with a

further imposition of his hand, and lastly made the sign of the Cross upon his forehead and kissed him.

The Baptismal ceremonies were now complete. The Baptism had really been administered in the middle of the service of the Holy Communion, and the new and the older Christians now for the first time went forward with that service together. The only difference between this Eucharist and any other was that in addition to the chalice of wine mingled with water there were also consecrated a chalice of water only, and a chalice of milk and honey. The newly baptized partook of all three chalices, the water being apparently intended to be a symbol of the inward effect of the washing of the body, and the milk and honey a symbol of the wealth of the new Promised Land into which the new Christian had passed over the waters of the Jordan of Baptism.

The service book of Hippolytus which we have been following provides also for the Baptism of the infant children of Christian parents. If these were born just before Easter they were baptized at the great service before the adult catechumens. If they were born at other times of the year they were baptized without any reference either to the Easter festival or to the presence of the bishop, the administrant being a presbyter or a deacon or even a layman. Sponsors made the renunciation and confession of faith and answered the questions in the name of the child, and they were understood to be responsible for his subsequent upbringing in Christian faith and life. The second part of the Baptism Service—the laying on of the bishop's hands with prayer, which in contradistinction from the first part has come to be known as Confirmation—was postponed until the child could be brought to the bishop. Some evidence has already been given to show that the Baptism of Infants had by the beginning of the third century become a generally established custom in the Church, though it had not achieved its position without a certain amount of heart-searching, and even as late as the last quarter of the second century a prominent writer of the North African Church, Tertullian, was pleading that children ought not to be baptized until they could understand the meaning of the service. But the example of Christ in blessing little children, and the general feeling of the fitness of things was felt to be enough to justify the practice, and as Christian families became more numerous Infant Baptisms must have begun to outnumber those of adults.

Perhaps the most important phrase in the whole service from

the point of view of doctrine is that used by the bishop in Confirmation, "Lord God, Which hast accounted them worthy to receive remission of sins by the Bath of Regeneration of the Holy Ghost, send upon them Thy grace that they may serve Thee." When we remember that this follows upon the solemn renunciation and confession of faith we see the principle which underlies the construction of the service. That principle is that Regeneration, which in the case of adults must have taken place before the service, and which in the case of infants must take place after the service, is said to take place formally or, to use an equivalent term, sacramentally at the service. For it cannot be supposed that a catechumen's renunciation and confession of faith were made for the first time at his Baptism. They were made in an elementary way at least as far back as the ceremony of his admission to the catechumenate. Equally, therefore, he did not become regenerate at the moment of his Baptism. He had been regenerate before. He was only formally or sacramentally made regenerate at Baptism. It is even plainer that when an infant was baptized Regeneration—always in the full sense which we have defined—together with renunciation and confession had to follow. It is, therefore, in this formal sense that we must understand the statement that Baptism is to a Catechumen his Bath of Regeneration of the Holy Ghost for the remission of sins.

The fact is that the Baptism Service of the early Church exactly carried out the New Testament conception of Baptism as a seal. In it was formally made that covenant between God and man which as a spiritual reality was made either before or after. To the adult, Baptism was a seal of the past: to the child, it was a pledge for the future. This conception will help us to steer a straight course through the otherwise difficult waters of the English Baptismal Offices.

IX

THE BAPTISM OF ADULTS

THERE are three services of Holy Baptism in the Prayer Book. The first and most commonly used is one for Infants, who are brought by their parents to the Church. The second consists really of two parts, a very short service to be used in a private house over a child who is at the point of death, and its complement to be used if the child recovers and can be brought to the Church at a later time. The third is a rather different service intended for adults. When the Prayer Book was drawn up, England had long been a Christian country. This meant that almost all children were baptized in infancy, and probably cases of the Baptism of adults were extremely rare. For this reason the framers of the earlier editions of the Prayer Book in 1549, 1552, and 1559, did not think it needful to provide a special service for adults. But it was a real detriment to the completeness of the Prayer Book that they did not do so, and at the last revision, completed in 1662, the defect was appreciated and remedied.

The matter is referred to in the fourth paragraph of the Preface to the Prayer Book which was written in that year. It is there said, "It was thought convenient, that some Prayers and Thanksgivings, fitted to special occasions, should be added in their due places; particularly for those at Sea, together with an office for the Baptism of such as are of Riper Years: which, although not so necessary when the former Book was compiled, yet by the growth of Anabaptism, through the licentiousness of the late times crept in amongst us, is now become necessary, and may be always used for the baptizing of natives in our plantations, and others converted to the faith." Anabaptism arose in Germany about the year 1521, and rapidly spread to England. It was a name which covered departures in various directions from the full Christian faith, and probably meant different things on different people's lips. But the Anabaptists seem to have

got their name from the fact that they shared with the more modern Baptists a disbelief in the lawfulness and wisdom of Infant Baptism. The allusion in the phrase "licentiousness of the late times" is to the general state of disorder which prevailed in the country during the period of the Civil War and the Commonwealth, whereby it happened that a large number of persons grew up without having been baptized. Moreover the seventeenth century witnessed a rapid increase in the area of our English colonies in America, and the settlers or planters there evidently realized that they had a responsibility towards the natives, and made some efforts to convert them to Christianity. The result of these different facts was that a service for baptizing adults was an obvious necessity, and a small committee of the Convocation which was engaged in the revision of the Prayer Book was appointed to draw up such a service. The committee consisted of three members, the leader being Dr. George Griffith, Bishop of St. Asaph. They obviously based their work upon the previous Infant Baptism Service, and only altered it where there was need.

In the New Testament we have seen that the Baptism of Adults was historically prior to the Baptism of Infants, and that the latter depended upon the former for its possibility. For this reason, though our English Adult Service is a later compilation than the Infant one, it will help us to be more clear in regard to doctrine if we deal with the Adult Service first. What we want to ask is whether this Service is consistent with the conclusion which we have drawn from the New Testament evidence that, in the case of an adult, Regeneration as a full spiritual reality is assumed, and Baptism follows upon it as a seal. It will be most convenient to go through the Service as it stands in the Prayer Book, and discuss the relevant phrases as we reach them.

In the first rubric we read "timely notice shall be given to the bishop or whom he shall appoint for that purpose . . . that so due care may be taken for their examination, whether they be sufficiently instructed in the Principles of the Christian Religion: and that they may be exhorted to prepare themselves with Prayers and Fasting for the receiving of this holy Sacrament." We are reminded forcibly of the preparations for Baptism in the Hippolytean Church Order which was outlined in the last chapter. Instruction is pre-supposed; an examination is to be held; and the candidate is to devote himself to spiritual exercises. If we ask what the subjects of the examination are intended to be, the answer is easy. They cannot have been intended to be anything

but the repentance and faith of the candidate. The bishop is to satisfy himself privately and informally as to the condition of the candidate's mind in respect of those very things about which public and formal inquiry will be made in the Service. The purpose of this plainly is that no candidate shall be admitted to Baptism unless it has appeared from his answers in the examination and from the evidence of his life that, as far as human eyes can discern, he has real repentance and faith. Of course in practice doubtful cases will arise. There may at any time be a repetition of the case of Simon Magus. Some candidate may be either a deliberate hypocrite or a self-deceiver. But a Service cannot be constructed to meet such cases. It has to assume the genuineness of the professions that are made.[1] The candidate is assumed to have really turned his back upon sin, and to be a sincere believer in Jesus Christ. But in such a case, as we have tried to show in the earlier chapters of this book, Regeneration has already taken place. It has already been effected by the Holy Spirit as the Divine side of that same spiritual change which to human eyes takes the form of repentance and faith.

It is most important to lay stress upon this. The rubric indeed gives us the key to the interpretation of all the subsequent phrases about Regeneration; and whatever may be said to happen to the candidate in the Service, certainly he cannot become in it what he is already, born again of the Holy Ghost.

The opening Exhortation contains some difficult phrases, based upon correspondingly difficult phrases in Holy Scripture. "Forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin" expresses a truth which is rather obscurely presented by St. Paul in Rom. v. 12-19, but which, along with its complement, may be simply expressed by saying that the good and bad acts of men and women lead to the existence of inborn tendencies to good and evil in their descendants. This statement, taken in a broad way and without too much stress on individuals or details, seems to be true to general human experience in spite of certain scientific difficulties about the method of the transmission of such tendencies. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" is a quotation from St. John iii. 6, and is practically equivalent in meaning to the preceding statement, "flesh" denoting not human

[1] Reflection will show that the whole of the Prayer Book Services are based upon this assumption, and become unreal and impossible if the assumption breaks down. It was one of the great services of the late Professor J. B. Mozley's *Review of the Baptismal Controversy* that it brought this fact into prominence.

nature in itself, but human nature as sinful. The rest of the sentence states that in all men the sinful tendency issues in sinful acts which are displeasing to God. Then follows a paraphrase of St. John iii. 5, a text asserting the necessity of a New Birth by the Holy Ghost, sealed by a Baptism with water. In the discussion of the meaning of this text in chap. ii. attention was confined to the birth by the Holy Ghost, which clearly was the principal point in our Saviour's mind.

We did not then dwell upon the fact that St. John represents the Saviour as connecting Baptism with water closely with the New Birth of the Spirit. That He did thus connect the two things at the end of His life we know from the other Gospels. St. John, however, gives us something new when he represents Christ as connecting them at this early stage of His Ministry. It has been made a matter for argument whether St. John is quite historically accurate in his report of our Lord's words to Nicodemus, but the point is irrelevant to our purpose, for the connection was certainly made in Christ's mind, whether He expressed it sooner or later.

The preceding statements of the needy position of mankind lead on to an urgent request for prayer for the candidate for Baptism. And here at once we see the need to remember what the prefatory rubric assumes about the candidate. He is already regenerate. It can therefore only be in a formal sense that prayer can be offered for his Regeneration. On the other hand he is not yet baptized, he is not yet received into Christ's Church as an Outward and Visible Society. There can therefore be prayer for the literal accomplishment of these things. It is no doubt a peculiarity of language that things accomplished and things unaccomplished should be thus prayed for in the same sentence. But it has already been shown that the peculiarity has its roots in the language of the New Testament, and the frank recognition of it, we shall see, gives us the most rational and consistent interpretation of the language used in the service as a whole.

The prayer following begins with two Old Testament stories of salvation by water, which are taken to be foreshadowings of the Salvation sealed in the waters of Baptism. It then refers to the Baptism of Christ as sanctifying water to the mystical washing away of sin. The word "mystical" needs explaining. It is equivalent to "sacramental". Now a sacrament is defined in the Catechism as an "outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us

thereof." Water mystically [1] or sacramentally washes away sin because it is the outward sign of God's forgiveness which literally cleanses the soul from sin, and it helps a Christian to believe in and to lay hold of that forgiveness. The water in itself has no power to cleanse the soul. The following petition shows the same peculiarity of language which we have noticed in the Exhortation. The washing of Regeneration, really past, is prayed for as if still to come, as if a perfect parallel to the literally future reception into the visible Church. The prayer beautifully closes with the thought of the perseverance in Christian life which must be the outcome of the New Birth.

The second prayer, while based upon different passages of Scripture, and emphasizing God's power to quicken the dead and His readiness to answer persistent prayer, has precisely the same burden as the first, and is constructed upon the same principle. There is therefore no need to dwell upon it.

The Gospel, and the address which follows it, are inserted as being suitable to adults, and as explaining the true nature and relations of Regeneration and Baptism. That Regeneration and Baptism are both required is maintained on the grounds of Christ's saying to Nicodemus, of His last command as recorded in St. Mark, and of St. Peter's speech on the Day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 38–40). On the other hand the quotation of the passage from 1 Peter iii. 21 shows that the framers of the Service had no doubt in their minds that Regeneration was vastly more important than Baptism. This prepares us to understand the statement with which the address opens: "Beloved, ye hear in this Gospel the express words of our Saviour Christ, that except a man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. Whereby ye may perceive the great necessity of this Sacrament, where it may be had." Granting that in ordinary cases Regeneration ought to be followed by Baptism, but granting also that Regeneration is the real essential, the question arises as to the salvation of a man who is regenerate but who through some unfortunate circumstance has never been baptized. The case was not infrequent in the early days of Christianity, for since Baptism was only administered as a rule once a year, and persecution was liable to break out at any moment, Christians were often martyred before they had been baptized. Their fellow-Christians could not help asking whether their loss of the Sacrament involved a loss of salvation, and the Holy Spirit

[1] Compare the second post-communion thanksgiving, where the Sacramental Bread and Wine are called "these holy mysteries."

undoubtedly guided them to the right answer that it did not. They commonly gave figurative expression to that answer by saying that such Christians had been baptized in their own blood. The principle that in exceptional cases Regeneration without Baptism is sufficient for Salvation is a very important one, and has its applications to-day. Precisely similar cases may occur in the mission-field if some sudden attack upon Christians in a particular locality is made. But apart from these martyrdoms the principle may surely apply to such bodies as the Quakers, who conscientiously believe that our Lord only instituted Sacraments as a temporary measure, or to the younger members of the Baptist Church, who are taught that Baptism should only be received at a mature age.

The last part of the address and the general thanksgiving which follows it may be conveniently dealt with together. Sacramental or formal language is again used, and here we have perhaps the best example of it. The congregation are to believe that God, according to His promise, will grant remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost to the candidates. They are to pray that they may be born again.

The next part of the Service consists of an address to the candidates, together with four questions about renunciation and faith and the desire for a public proclamation of them in Baptism. It will be remembered that a similar set of questions was asked in the Hippolytean Service. The formal and summarizing character of the wording is still retained. The candidates have long since renounced the devil and set their faith on Christ. That they have not only done so with their lips, but have also proved the genuineness of their profession by their lives, has been ascertained by careful inquiry before the Service began. What they are now required to do is to repeat their previous vows in a formal and public way. The repetition of these vows helps us to see exactly the meaning which ought to be put on the previous prayers for Regeneration. If the repentance and faith are not new at the moment of the Service, neither is the Regeneration.

Of the four short prayers which follow, the last three admit of a natural and literal interpretation. They pray that the regenerate man may continue in a state of Regeneration, ever bringing forth fresh fruits of the Spirit, ever triumphing against evil, and may at last be rewarded by a place in the Kingdom of Heaven. The first prayer hovers between the formal and the natural. It may be read as a prayer for Regeneration, regarded

as not yet having taken place; in which case it is parallel to the preceding prayers; or it may be read as a prayer for continuance in the regenerate state, in which case all four little prayers are of the same kind.

The purpose of the next prayer is to consecrate the water to its sacred use, just as in the Sacrament of the Holy Communion the Bread and Wine are consecrated. The important sentence is "Sanctify this Water to the mystical washing away of sin." The word "mystical" has already been explained. The Water is solemnly set apart so that when it is sprinkled over the candidate (or he is dipped in it), it may be to him a divinely appointed sign and seal of his Regeneration by the Holy Spirit and of the forgiveness of his sins.

There is no need to dwell upon the formulæ of Baptism. The baptized person is declared to be admitted as a member of the Congregation of Christ's flock; and he is reminded by the quotation of our Lord's words that he is being admitted not to a Society which is concerned with merely earthly things, but to one in which every true member has a living spiritual relationship to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

The next section of the service, containing the priest's declaration, the Lord's Prayer and the collect following, is vitally important, because it contains both the crowning instance of the formal or sacramental language used in the Service, and also a justification of the interpretation which we have been placing upon it. The priest makes a public declaration that "these persons are regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's Church." The phrase has been the very storm-centre of Baptismal controversy, and has been construed in various ways. At the risk of repetition let it be said once more that if we read into the word Regeneration its full Biblical content, so that it denotes a person who has manifested the signs of the working of the Holy Ghost, and if we accept the intimation not obscurely given in the first rubric to the Service that the candidates for Baptism have, like Cornelius, already manifested those signs, then "these persons are regenerate" cannot mean that they have become regenerate from the moment when they were plunged into the waters of Baptism, but must mean that their Regeneration, being a previously accomplished fact, has now in Baptism been openly recognized and sealed by the Church.

The Thanksgiving after the Lord's Prayer affords a justification for this view which has not always received the attention which it deserves. Some reader has perhaps been saying to himself,

"The interpretation of all the prayers for Regeneration in the purely formal way is surely somewhat strained. Would it not be better to ignore the opening rubric, which after all is not part of the Service, and to suppose that though the candidate may have repentance and faith, yet he is not literally regenerate until the moment of his Baptism? In this case the opening prayers for Regeneration have a literal meaning; and when, after the Baptism, the priest announces that the person is regenerate, he is announcing something really new, something which has been accomplished by the Baptism." The objection to which expression is thus given lies against the existence of prayers for the Regeneration of one who is, on our interpretation, already regenerate. Now on any interpretation of the Service the person baptized, assuming his genuineness, is regenerate after his Baptism. Yet the statement that this person "is regenerate," that is, has received a New Birth of the Holy Spirit, is immediately followed by a fresh petition that he may receive the Spirit. "Give Thy Holy Spirit to these persons; that, being now born again, and made heirs of everlasting salvation, through our Lord Jesus Christ, they may continue Thy servants and attain Thy promises." If it is strained to pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit to a regenerate man before his Baptism, it is no less strained to pray for that gift after his Baptism. The language of the Service is in fact uniform throughout, and we do not get out of the difficulty of formal language by ignoring the opening rubric, as the objector suggests. In fact the opening rubric, interpreted in a way which is based upon the New Testament identification of repentance and faith with Regeneration, and taken in conjunction with this post-baptismal petition, seems to allow no other possibility than the formal interpretation which has been adopted.

The reader may perhaps here ask another question: "If the formal interpretation is correct, are the opening prayers of any real value? What is the good of asking for what has been already granted?" Consider first the post-baptismal prayer. How can there be any real meaning here? It has been already suggested that light is thrown upon the matter by the remembrance that Christ was full of the Holy Ghost from His Birth, and yet He received the Spirit afresh at His Baptism. This is only a rather loose and yet exceedingly common way of saying that the Holy Spirit, personally present in Christ throughout His life, gave Him at His birth the gifts which were needful to Him in His home life, and added at the Baptism those further gifts which were necessary for active ministry. So, though a man may have

received from the Holy Spirit the gift of the new spiritual life, it is perfectly possible and right to pray for him that he may receive further gifts whereby his life may continue and develop. This is the real intention of the post-baptismal collect. But the same principle, applied to the initial prayers of the Service, will cause them to bear, not merely the formal meaning on which stress has hitherto been laid, but also a real meaning in reference to the baptized person's future. For though Baptism is a sign and seal of a previous Regeneration, yet it should not be without its spiritual effect upon him who is baptized. As Article XXVII. expresses it, "Faith is confirmed and Grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God." A candidate comes to Baptism with spiritual life already quickened within him. But this life needs to be nourished, that it may bring forth in ever fuller measure the fruits of Christian character. Now the nourishment of spiritual life consists in "means of grace," and of these Baptism as a Sacrament is certainly one. A candidate who enters prayerfully into the service of Baptism will certainly find that by it his faith has been confirmed and his graces have been increased. He will have received a fresh endowment of the Holy Spirit. Such at any rate has been the experience of countless Christians who have been baptized in mature life. To these persons the opening prayers for Regeneration need be no mere formal words. Their formal sense will indeed remain their primary and most strictly accurate one. But those who rightly use them will find that they are praying that fresh gifts and graces of the Spirit may be bestowed through that service in which the Church formally recognizes and seals His regenerating work in the administration of Holy Baptism.

There is one more consideration which may be presented to those who feel a difficulty in the character of the Prayer Book language. The objection raised is that it is unusual and unnatural. As a matter of fact, this is far from being the case. It belongs to a type which can be easily and amply illustrated from common life. The point is well made in the following paragraph: "There is the well-known mode of speech according to which the sign can be spoken of in terms which belong properly only to the thing signified. Thus a man can say of the portrait of his father, 'That is my father.' Similarly, a man can receive from another the title-deed of a property, the sign and seal of the gift, and can thank him for having given the property to him, without prejudice to the question as to whether or when he enters into the actual possession of it. Again, a man places

the ring, the token of the marriage contract, on his bride's finger, and is reckoned accordingly as giving to her then and there not only his love and devotion, but also all his worldly goods; but the last moment when the gift of the love is likely to begin, or the endowment is likely to take place, is the moment when the sign is given and the profession made. The reason of this is that the placing of the ring on the finger is the recognized sign of the attitude and gift, and the means and moment of their receiving ordered visibility; accordingly the use of the sign is accompanied by language which properly belongs only to the process and attitude signified. This principle of sign language was thoroughly recognized both by the Fathers and by the Reformers."[1] In a note on the same page as that from which the above paragraph is taken is a quotation from Bishop Jewel, a very representative writer of the English Church in the age in which the Prayer Book was drawn up: "We must consider that the learned Fathers in their treatises of the Sacraments sometimes use the outward sign instead of the thing itself that is signified; sometimes they use the thing signified instead of the sign. As, for example, sometimes they name Christ's blood instead of the water; sometimes they name the water (*i.e.* of Baptism) instead of Christ's blood. This figure is called *metonymia*, that is to say, an exchange of names; and is much used among the learned, especially speaking of the Sacraments." The application of this to the precise phrases of our Baptism Service is clear. The authors of the Service wrote, *e.g.*, "We call upon Thee for these persons, that they coming to Thy holy Baptism, may receive remission of their sins by spiritual Regeneration." What they meant to do, and would be understood to mean to do, was to pray that the persons might so receive the outward and visible sign and seal of Regeneration that the gifts of the Holy Spirit which they already possessed might be increased and others added thereto, that their already accomplished Regeneration might lead to an ever richer regenerate life.

[1] A. J. Tait: *Nature and Function of the Sacraments*, p. 60.

X

THE BAPTISM OF INFANTS

In the Church of England the Service for the Baptism of Infants is the familiar one, and it is probably no exaggeration to say that most Churchpeople have never been present at any other. Historically it is older than the Service for an Adult, and is found in the First Edition of the Prayer Book in 1549, though not quite in its present form. The 1549 Service was based partly on the ancient Baptismal Offices of the Church of England (which in their turn were developed from the still older Services of the Primitive Church, such as the one outlined in chap. viii.), and partly on a German Reformed Prayer Book drawn up by Archbishop Hermann of Cologne in 1545. Its marked characteristic was a great simplification of ritual. In the Second Edition of the Prayer Book in 1552 the ritual was still further simplified, and the Service was brought into its present form.

We have already noticed that when in 1662 it became advisable to draw up a Service for Adults, the framers of that Service followed the outline of the already existing Infant Service, and only made such alterations as were necessary. Large parts of the two Services are therefore the same, save for purely verbal changes, such as the obvious substitution of "servants" or "persons" for "child." The main differences in the 1552 Service from the form which we have already studied are—

(1) In the Preface there is no sentence referring to actual sin.[1]

(2) The Lesson is the story of Christ blessing little children instead of the story of Nicodemus.

(3) The Address is shorter. It contains no Scripture passages asserting the necessity in normal cases of Baptism, and does not

[1] The child's "sins" are, however, referred to in the second introductory Collect and in the Address to the Sponsors. They are obviously spoken of by anticipation in the same way as the Regeneration is anticipated.

assume the presence of repentance and faith in those who are to be baptized.

(4) The four questions are addressed to the Godparents who are to answer in the name of the child.

(5) The prayer of thanksgiving after the Lord's Prayer is quite different.

There is no need to go through the Service in detail. It will be sufficient to look at the phrases about Regeneration. There are the preliminary prayers for the Regeneration of the child. "I beseech you to call upon God the Father . . . that of His bounteous mercy He will grant to this child that thing which by nature he cannot have; that he may be baptized with Water and the Holy Ghost." "Mercifully look upon this child; wash him and sanctify him with the Holy Ghost." "We call upon Thee for this Infant, that he, coming to Thy Holy Baptism, may receive remission of his sins by spiritual Regeneration." "Give Thy Holy Spirit to this Infant, that he may be born again, and be made an heir of everlasting salvation." After the Baptism we have the priest's declaration: "This child is regenerate," and the associated thanksgiving: "We yield Thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased Thee to regenerate this Infant with Thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for Thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into Thy holy Church." The crucial phrase is: "This child is regenerate." Now consistency requires that the Service for Infants should be interpreted upon the same principles as guided us in our handling of the Service for Adults. In that case the adult was, if sincere, literally regenerate before the Service began. Therefore "This person is regenerate," regarded as a direct result of the Baptism and *achieved at the moment of Baptism*, could, we saw, only mean: "This person has now received the seal of Regeneration." It must mean precisely the same thing in the Infant Service, but for a directly opposite reason. In the former case Regeneration was antecedent to Baptism, in the latter it must be subsequent to it. For Regeneration, in the Biblical sense, we have held to be the correlative of repentance and faith, and therefore to be impossible to a little child, except in the very rudimentary sense to which reference was made towards the end of chap. vii. This interpretation governs the meanings to be read into the other passages. The preliminary prayers for Regeneration may, of course, be taken quite literally; only they may not be considered to imply that the Regeneration will be effected at the Baptism. The

closing prayer may be paraphrased thus: "It hath pleased Thee to give this child the seal of Regeneration by Thy Holy Spirit. . . . We beseech Thee to grant that he [being now, by the word of his sponsors, pledged to a death unto sin and a New Birth unto righteousness, and having received from God the sealed promise of that New Birth], may in experience literally crucify the sinful tendencies which are within him; and as he has in symbol died to sin [his plunge beneath the waters of Baptism resembling the burial of Christ whereby the power of sin over Him was broken], so he may in spirit share in the new victorious life upon which Christ entered at His resurrection."

Dr. Moule, Bishop of Durham, has thus explained the position of the baptized Infant: "There are legal documents called *escrows*. These are deeds of conveyance which speak in the present tense, and do a present act of gift and transfer, but they carry with them a condition to be fulfilled before the effect is actualized. Till that condition is fulfilled the present giving does not become actual possession. The receiver of the title-deed does not actually enter on the property given in it. He has it in title, but he has it not yet in act and use. He has something at once. He received a beneficial title, right and pledge, the possession of which conceivably at once entitles him to special care, attention and privileges. So Baptism, at once and literally, in the sense of title, makes an infant a member of the Church—a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven. In the sense of title, he is at once regenerate. He receives at once in that respect the acceptance of an adopted child of God in Christ, and the new life, which is wrought in man by the Holy Ghost. But in the ordinary law of God's working revealed in His Word, these precious things, in their actual possession, await the humble claim of repentance and faith. So the Infant who in Sacramental title is born again, still needs to be born again. He is baptismally regenerated, but he needs subsequently to be actually regenerated by Faith and Repentance."[1]

It is worth while to add the following extract from St. Augustine, the great theologian of the early Western Church: "Believing is nothing else than having faith; and accordingly, when, on behalf of an infant as yet incapable of exercising faith, the answer is given that he believes, this answer means that he has faith because of the Sacrament of Faith, and in like manner the answer is made that he turns himself to God because of the Sacrament of

[1] Quoted in the *Tutorial Prayer Book*, p. 375.

Conversion, since the answer itself belongs to the celebration of the Sacrament. Thus the Apostle says, in regard to this Sacrament of Baptism, 'We are buried with Christ by Baptism into death.' He does not say, 'We have signified our being buried with Him,' but 'we have been buried with Him.' He has, therefore, given to the Sacrament pertaining to so great a transaction no other name than the word describing the transaction itself. Therefore an infant, although he is not yet a believer in the sense of having the faith which includes the consenting will of those who exercise it, nevertheless becomes a believer through the Sacrament of that faith. For as it is answered that he believes, so also he is called a believer, not because he assents to the truth by an act of his own judgment, but because he receives the Sacrament of that truth."[1] St. Augustine here illustrates by reference to the Baptism Service that common interchange of the sign and the thing signified to which Jewel was referring in the quotation made from him at the end of the last chapter. The recognition of this interchange is vital to the true understanding of the Service.

The question was raised in connection with Adult Baptism: "What is the good of it upon this theory?" and answer was given in terms of the Twenty-seventh Article, that a sincere candidate for Baptism has his faith increased and his spiritual life deepened by participation in the Service. The same question is raised in connection with the Baptism of Infants. Indeed, it is raised in a more acute form because of the difference of opinion between Baptists and most other Christian denominations on the lawfulness of Infant Baptism. The question is put in this shape: "In what respect is the unbaptized child of Baptist parents worse off than the baptized child of Church parents?" The question touches many closely, and needs to be frankly faced and answered. The answer which is dictated by the principle of interpretation adopted in this book may be put as follows. It has always been held that if an adult Christian dies unbaptized, his Baptism having been prevented by some unavoidable cause, such as martyrdom, he loses no Divine blessing thereby, and is in God's sight in the same position as one who has been baptized. Now the child of a Baptist is kept back from Baptism by a cause over which he has no control, namely, his parents' disbelief in the value of Infant Baptism. By parity of reasoning, he is no worse off as regards the Divine blessing than an infant who has been baptized.

[1] From Augustine's Letter to Boniface.

The same conclusion may be reached by another line of argument. There is a great text (2 Cor. v. 19): "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." Christ's atonement is on a world scale. It embraces potentially every human being. It is quite true that, to those who have been taught about it, the condition of receiving the benefits of the Atonement is faith. "By faith ye are saved." But this condition cannot be applied in full strictness either to little children or to the heathen, who, for different reasons, have not heard the message of the Gospel. An examination of the position of the heathen is not relevant to the present purpose. But of little children we are surely warranted in saying that they all come under the cloak of Christ's atoning work. Just so far as there is any general displeasure of God against the human family, because they are all, young and old alike, involved by virtue of their humanity in the consequences of the sin of Adam, that displeasure is removed in Christ. The technical way of saying this is that "original sin" which, according to Article IX., "deserveth God's wrath and damnation," is forgiven.

Thus, by a double line of argument, we are led to the conclusion that all little children are the recipients of God's blessing. His Holy Spirit begins a regenerating work upon them all. The success and continuance of that work will depend, firstly, upon the way in which they are taught the Christian faith; and, secondly, upon whether they do their part by believing in Christ. But so far as infants are concerned, the answer is clear: there is no difference in God's sight between one that has been baptized and one that has not.[1]

Does this mean that Infant Baptism is valueless? Far from it. It has real advantages. In the first place the Baptism is enshrined in a Service of prayer. Petition for the spiritual welfare of the child is offered by the Minister, the parents, the Godparents, the assembled Congregation. If that prayer is sincerely and earnestly offered, it must bring down a blessing upon the child. Dare we indeed neglect such prayer, when we consider the truth that God seems sometimes to withhold a blessing because He wishes His children to ask Him for it? Moreover we have seen that Baptism is the Christ-ordained seal of Regeneration. As such, it has an immediate helpfulness to the parents and Godparents. It is to them a sign that the child has entered into covenant relationship with God. It is to them a pledge that

[1] The view expressed in the text carries with it rejection of the theory sometimes advanced that "original sin" is washed away in Baptism.

their efforts to call out his faith are being invisibly aided by the regenerating power of the Spirit. It is a warrant to them to believe that if he dies in infancy he is sure of a place in heaven.

Similarly, when the child begins to be able to understand the elements of the Christian faith, it is helpful to him to look back to his Baptism. That Baptism becomes a pledge to him in just the same way as it is to his Godparents. It becomes also a challenge to him to fulfil the responsibilities which were undertaken in his name.

If it is said, as indeed it is said by the Quakers, that no such seals and pledges are necessary, the only answer is, that general Christian experience points the other way, and that Christ Himself did see a value in them.

The question which has been the subject of the preceding paragraphs was asked in the sixteenth century. The Prayer Book gives its answer in the note at the end of the Baptism Service. In one respect the position which has been here adopted goes further than the Prayer Book. The Reformers were sure about the salvation of baptized infants. They deliberately refused to say that unbaptized infants were not saved.

A few words may be added upon what we have come to call the Confirmation Service. It will be remembered that in the Hippolytean Church Order a laying on of hands by the bishop was the closing act of the Service, and that this was the only part of the Service which was reserved exclusively for the bishop. When Baptism came to be administered by parish clergy apart from their bishop, the laying on of hands had to be deferred until he visited the parish. The result of this has been that the Baptism Service has not for many centuries been completed at one time, but an interval of greater or less extent has come between the first and second parts.

Since Infant Baptism so enormously preponderates over Adult, this interval is convenient. The second part of the Service can be deferred until the Infants come to years of discretion, and the laying on of hands can then be associated with an assumption by the baptized of those vows which were originally taken in their name by their Godparents. The Confirmation Service, therefore, now as through the bulk of the Christian centuries, wears a double character. It is an occasion when the baptized confirm or renew their vows of renunciation and faith. It is also an occasion when, in answer to the prayers of themselves and the Church, they are confirmed or strengthened by the reception of fresh gifts of the Holy Spirit [not, let it be repeated, by the

reception of the Holy Spirit for the first time, as some people wrongly seem to think]. The laying on of hands upon the head of the candidate may perhaps best be interpreted as a symbol of the concentration of the Church's prayers upon him, invoking for him the Divine blessing.

The Confirmation Service in the Prayer Book is not quite suitable for those who have been baptized as Adults. Some of the language does not fit their case, and moreover the renewal of vows is for them unnecessary. It is no doubt fitting that they should receive the laying on of hands as soon as conveniently may be after their Baptism, but the provision of a more suitable Form of Service is much to be desired.

XI

THE ANGLICAN DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM

It was the boast of the Reformers to whom we owe our Prayer Book that they went back behind the perverted Christian tradition of the Middle Ages to the pure Word of God, and based their doctrine directly upon it, so that, as they said in Article VI. "Whatsoever is not read therein nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." The services of the mediæval Church, precious heritage as they were, were affected by the growth of unscriptural doctrine, and the question immediately arose what was to be done with them. It is a matter for great thankfulness that they were not scrapped altogether by the Anglican Reformers as they were by certain others, but were modified where necessary so as to be in accordance with Scripture. Thus the old was preserved in a purified form, and the link with earlier Christian centuries was not broken.

What we have done in this book has been first to appeal to Scripture for its teaching on Regeneration and Baptism, and then to examine our Baptismal Offices with that teaching in our minds. We found that we were required to interpret the language of the Offices not in a direct and dogmatic, but in a sacramental manner. Thus interpreted, there was no doubt that the doctrine lying behind them was thoroughly Scriptural. We were content for the time to notice that such sacramental language was really by no means unusual; that it was not only recognized by the theologians of the Reformation period and by such an eminent early Christian writer as St. Augustine, but that it could be amply illustrated in other spheres.

It will however confirm us in our interpretation if we can show that where the Prayer Book is definitely dogmatic on the subject of Baptism, it does teach the doctrine which we deduced from Scripture and which we argued was implied by the Baptismal

Services when sacramentally interpreted. Now the dogmatic teaching of the Prayer Book is to be found in the Articles and Catechism, and we must therefore inquire what they assert. It will be convenient to begin with the Articles.

There is a reference in Article IX. which deals with "original sin" or the tendency to sin which infects human nature. The Article says that "this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated," and that "there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized" [the Latin version of the Articles substitutes "regenerated" for "baptized"]. There is nothing here that needs comment. The fact is painfully true to Christian experience.

Article XXVII. deals definitely with Baptism. "Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of Regeneration or New Birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church: the promises of the forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; Faith is confirmed and Grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God. The Baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ."

This should be read in connection with the first paragraph of Article XXV., which expounds the theory of Sacraments in general terms: "Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and God's good will towards us, by the which He doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our Faith in Him."

The main points made may be set out thus—

1. Baptism is not merely a distinguishing mark between one who is a Christian and one who is not. This is supposed[1] to have been the view of a Continental Reformer called Zwingli. We may perhaps paraphrase it thus: "Baptism is not merely a ceremony which marks entrance into the Visible Church."

2. It is a sign and seal of Regeneration by the Holy Ghost, of adoption to be a son of God, of the forgiveness of sins.

3. It is not useless, but effectual in its capacity as sign and seal. Its effectiveness, however, is not unconditioned. It is only effectual to those who use it rightly.

[1] Many would say "wrongly supposed."

4. Baptism is enshrined in a service of prayer, and the general result of the whole is that an already existing faith is confirmed, and an already operative grace is increased. It is plain that here adults are mainly in view.

5. Infant Baptism is most agreeable to the mind of Christ. It is implied that the effectiveness of Baptism for an Infant is delayed until he becomes capable of faith.

In the Catechism Baptism is touched on in the opening questions and in the sacramental section at the end. The most important statement at the beginning is the child's second answer. "My Godfathers and Godmothers in my Baptism: wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven." At the end we are taught that the inward and spiritual grace is "a death unto sin and a New Birth unto righteousness, for being by nature born in sin and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace" Of this inward grace, Baptism, as a Sacrament, is an "outward and visible sign," ordained by Christ to be "a pledge to assure us," and also to be a "means whereby we receive the same." The condition of Baptism is "repentance, whereby they forsake sin; and Faith, whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that Sacrament." Infants are baptized because they make both these promises by the mouth of their sureties, and they are bound to keep them "when they come to age."

It should perhaps be mentioned that the two sections of the Catechism are of different dates, and from different pens. The first part was drawn up in 1549, and stood as part of the Confirmation service. It was probably the work of a certain Dean Nowell. The part dealing with the Sacraments was not written until 1604. It was added in response to a request of the Puritans, and is generally attributed to Dr. Overall, then Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in London.

The teaching of the Sacramental section clearly agrees with that of the Articles. Baptism pre-supposes in all cases repentance and faith. Adults can make profession of these with their own lips; Infants must find sponsors to speak in their name.

The spiritual reality behind Baptism is the New Birth, of which it is the seal and pledge. The phrase "a means whereby we receive the same" recalls the phrase "faith is confirmed and grace is increased by virtue of prayer unto God."

It is in the light of this teaching that we must understand the answer at the beginning written by Dean Nowell, "my Baptism

wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven." We certainly may not understand this to mean that the grace of Regeneration is conveyed by the Sacrament at the moment of its administration in virtue of some quasi-magical power resident in itself. Quite strictly it can only mean "wherein I received the seal of, or my title, to membership of Christ." But we must remember that the Catechism was written for the instruction of children who have been baptized in infancy, and who, by hypothesis, are actually growing up as Christians, and who can never remember a time when they were not taught to pray, and given some elementary instruction in the Christian faith. Such children can truly say—though of course they would not put it in these words—that they have been regenerate from infancy. Their New Birth and their Baptism both lie close together in the dimly remembered first years of life. It is natural for them, therefore, to speak of the two things together. Just as St. Paul could write "buried with Him by Baptism into death" or "but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified," so can the child say "My Baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven."

XII

THE APPEAL OF BAPTISM

One section of the Office of Baptism remains to be considered. At the close of the Service for Infants there is an Exhortation to the Godparents concerning their duties, followed by a separate injunction to bring the child to the bishop for Confirmation as soon as he shall have been prepared. The Service for Adults relegates the matter of Confirmation to a rubric, but contains two exhortations—one addressed to the witnesses of the Baptism, and the other to the newly baptized. These two are worded very similarly to the one in the Service for Infants.

Something may first be said about Godparents and their duties. We should expect that as soon as Infant Baptism came to be an established custom in the Church, it would give rise to the existence of an order of Godparents. They were necessary then, as they are now, to make the vows of renunciation and faith in the name of the child. They were even more necessary then than they are now to superintend on behalf of the whole Church the child's Christian upbringing, for in those days of persecution no one could tell whether it might not suddenly be left without father or mother, or both. Our expectation of finding references to Godparents in the early Christian literature is not disappointed, though the number of passages is small. First, Tertullian, in his tract on Baptism, written a little before the year 200, writes: "Why[1] is it necessary that the Sponsors likewise should be thrust into danger; who, both themselves, by reason of mortality, may fail to fulfil their promises, and may be disappointed by the development of evil disposition [in their Godchild]?"

Then the Canons of Hippolytus, drawn up perhaps twenty-five years afterwards, refer to "those who make the responses for infants." But quite the most interesting reference comes in the fourth century from St. Augustine: "Infants are brought to

[1] Some more of this passage has been already quoted in the note to chap. vi.

receive spiritual grace, not so much by those in whose hands they are carried (though they are brought by those also if they be good and faithful), as by the universal society of the saints and faithful: for they are rightly understood to be offered by all those who are pleased that they are offered, and by whose holy and inseparable love they are helped to participate in the Holy Spirit. This is done, therefore, by the whole Mother Church, which is in the saints, because she, as a whole, brings forth all, and she, as a whole, brings forth individuals." Here we have a beautiful expression of the corporate feeling in the Church, every member regarding himself as having an interest in, and a responsibility for, those who were newly admitted to the Body by Baptism.

The number of Sponsors or Godparents has varied considerably in different ages and localities. In early times one was considered sufficient, and one is still the customary number in the Eastern Church. The Church of Rome to-day requires one and allows two The Church of England has been historically more exacting. The Council of Worcester, held in the year 1240, ordered that there should be two men and one woman for each boy, and two women and one man for each girl. This rule is found in the Prayer Book, "and note, that there shall be for every male-child to be baptized two Godfathers and one Godmother, and for every female, one Godfather and two Godmothers." In some Canons or rules of Convocation passed in 1603 it was further enacted that Godparents must be duly qualified persons. No one is to be allowed to stand as Godfather or Godmother to a child "before the said person so undertaking hath received the Holy Communion."

It is to be feared that these rules of the Church of England about the number and quality of the Godparents have been more honoured in the breach than in the observance. No one who has had much experience of Parish work can fail to have discovered the exceeding difficulty of carrying them out. If they were both strictly insisted on, if even the Prayer Book rule of three Godparents was strictly insisted on, probably the number of Baptisms would materially decrease. Case after case arises where parents who desire to keep the rule cannot find friends who are both suitable in character and willing and able to be present at the Service. It is not to the present purpose to discuss how far it is wise and necessary to modify the rules to meet the pressure of circumstances. But it may, on the other hand, be urged that however much modification is necessary in particular cases, the rules represent an ideal towards which we should always be

striving. It should be regarded as an ideal for every Baptism that there should be present an interested "congregation," consisting of really good Christian people — best of all earnest Communicants—who mean to pray regularly for the child and to do their utmost for its spiritual welfare.

This leads us on to the next point, the duties of Godparents. "Ye must remember, that it is your parts and duties to see that this Infant be taught, so soon as he shall be able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise, and profession he hath here made by you. And that he may know these things the better, ye shall call upon him to hear Sermons: and chiefly ye shall provide, that he may learn the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments in the vulgar tongue, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health; and that this child be brought up to lead a godly and a Christian life." The language is no doubt somewhat old-fashioned, and possibly represents theories of education which are out of date: but it is not difficult to translate it into modern speech. The duty of the Godparent is to further, by every means in his power, the religious and moral education of his Godchild. Comment is needless, but the reader who possesses the high privilege of being a Godparent may be urged to ask himself how far he is living up to the ideal.

The Exhortation closes with what is practically an appeal to all who are baptized. At the Hippolytean Easter Eve Service of Baptism the whole congregation was present. The Prayer Book regards it as desirable that there should be a congregation in addition to the family immediately concerned. Hence the first rubric to the Service: "It is most convenient that Baptism should not be administered but upon Sundays, and other Holy Days, when the most number of people come together; as well for that the congregation there present may testify the receiving of them that be newly baptized into the number of Christ's Church; as also because in the Baptism of Infants every man present may be put in remembrance of his own profession made to God in his Baptism." Another rubric adds that Baptisms should be celebrated in the middle of Morning or Evening Prayer, thus modifying the primitive practice of celebrating them in the middle of Holy Communion. Whatever may be thought of the possibility and desirability of Baptisms as part of the ordinary Sunday Service—and experience shows that if they take place occasionally they are exceedingly profitable—it is at any rate good that we should be reminded from time to time of our Baptismal vows. This short study of the meaning of Baptism

may well close with the prayer that writer and readers alike may "remember always, that Baptism doth represent unto us our profession; which is, to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto Him; that, as He died, and rose again for us, so should we, who are baptized, die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness; continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and Godliness of living."

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